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THE
THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF
WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.

SOMETIME LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

VOL. VIII.

THE CHURCH CATECHISM EXPLAINED;
PRIVATE THOUGHTS ON RELIGION;
THE GREAT ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY OF PUBLIC PRAYER,
AND OF FREQUENT COMMUNION;
AND
A DEFENCE OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS, COLLECTED INTO ENGLISH METRE
BY THOMAS STERNHOLD, JOHN BARKINS, AND OTHERS.

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FOR THE USE OF THE DIOCESE OF ST. ASAPH.

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A DEFENCE OF THE BOOK OF PSALMS,

COLLECTED INTO ENGLISH METRE,

BY THOMAS STERNHOLD, JOHN HOPKINS, AND OTHERS;

WITH CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE LATE NEW VERSION,

COMPARED WITH THE OLD 613

THE
CHURCH CATECHISM
EXPLAINED:

FOR THE USE OF
THE DIOCESE OF ST. ASAPH.

In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.—1 *Cor.* xiv. 19.

And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.—*Eph.* vi. 4.

TO
THE CLERGY
OF
THE DIOCESE OF ST. ASAPH.

BRETHREN, BELOVED IN THE LORD,

As God our Saviour, the Head of the whole Church, which He hath purchased with His blood, hath been pleased to call me, the unworthiest of His servants, to take care of that part of it which He hath planted in the Diocese to which you belong ; so I verily believe and expect that He will ere long call me to give Him an account how I have discharged the trust, and performed the duty, which He hath laid upon me. The consideration whereof hath made me very solicitous and thoughtful what to do, and how I may behave myself in this place and station, so that I may appear before Him at that day with joy, and not with shame and grief.

Whereupon, calling to mind the several parts of the office which He hath conferred upon me, and the promises which I made when I was admitted into it, I presently thought it necessary to begin with that, without which, whatsoever else either you or I shall do, will turn to little or no account as to the main end of our ministry ; I mean,

the duty of catechising or instructing the people committed to our care in the principles of the Christian religion, that they may know what they must believe and do, that they may serve God acceptably while they live upon earth, and be happy for ever.

Not as if I thought that this duty hath been hitherto neglected among you: for I have heard, to my great comfort, that it is generally practised throughout the Diocese every Lord's Day. But, taking my measures from what I have observed in other places, I fear, that notwithstanding all your care and diligence, you have not yet found that happy effect of it which you desire; and therefore will be glad of any direction or assistance that may be given you, for the more effectual performance of it.

It is, I confess, a thing much to be lamented, that among the many who profess the faith of Christ, there are so few that either strive to live up to it themselves, or take care that their relations and families should be taught it. Whereby it comes to pass, that in many places the Minister is often forced to omit this duty, for want of some to whom he may perform it. But, howsoever, that should not discourage, but rather excite you to use the greater diligence and application both in public and private, to convince those under your charge of the great necessity that lies upon them to observe what the laws both of God and man require in this case, as ever they expect or desire that either they or theirs should be saved: not doubting but that God's blessing will attend your sincere endeavours in this, as well as in the execution of any other part of the office and ministry to which He hath called you.

And whatsoever other difficulties you may meet with, you have a great advantage in having so many persons of great worth and quality among you, who, rightly understanding the excellent and truly Apostolical constitution of our Church,

have a just value and zeal for it; which I doubt not but they will be ready upon all occasions to shew, by setting before their tenants and neighbours a good example, as in other respects, so particularly in sending their children and servants to be catechised publicly in the Church: which they will do the more constantly, when they find that you do not only examine those who are sent, whether they can say the Catechism, but set yourselves in good earnest to instruct them thoroughly in all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and in all the duties which they owe to Almighty God, to their sovereign, to their parents, and to all their other relations, as well as to themselves and to one another. For they will then see that this is the best sort of education that parents can give their children, and that which will do them more good than any thing else which they can ever do for them.

Upon these and the like considerations, having spent some thoughts about catechising in general, so as to attain the end of it in the way that is here proposed; and having accordingly drawn up a short explication of the Catechism which our Church has set forth, I thought good to present you with it, as a testimony of my readiness to contribute what I can towards the laying the foundation in some, as well as to the building up others of the Diocese in our most holy faith.

If it hath no other, I hope, at least, it will have this good effect, that it will put you in mind to stir up the gift of God, which is in you, by the imposition of hands, and to exert it in studying, contriving, and using all the means and methods that you can think of, that all in your respective parishes, who as yet are young or ignorant, but capable of learning, may be so well instructed in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose, that they may be fit to be confirmed.

In the meanwhile, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to crown all your labours with success, and to carry you through the whole work which He hath set you, to the glory of His great Name, the benefit of His Church and people, and to your own everlasting joy and felicity.

W. ASAPH.

London, 19th September, 1704.

P R E F A C E.

IF we consider the excellency of that religion which Jesus Christ hath revealed and delivered to us in His Gospel, we may well expect, that all who embrace and profess it should be the most excellent persons upon earth, far exceeding all other men in piety, and justice, and charity, and temperance, and every thing that is virtuous and praiseworthy. But we see to our grief and shame, that many who do not only profess it among us, but have the Gospel continually preached to them, are notwithstanding as bad, if not much worse, than some of those who never heard of it. Neither can it be otherwise, so long as the great duty of catechising, or instructing people in the first principles of the Christian Religion, is so generally neglected or slightly performed, as it hath been for many years together. For people being baptized into Christ, as they ought to be, in their infancy, although they then promised by their sureties to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to obey God's Commandments, and are accordingly obliged to do so, yet unless they be rightly informed, as they grow up, of what they then promised, before they have contracted any ill habits, whatsoever outward profession they may make of the Christian Religion, it hath little or no effect upon them. For they usually profess it, not as it is the religion of Christ, but as it is the religion of their country, in which they are born and bred. And although they have the Gospel preached over and over again to them, and make it a great

part of their religion to hear it, yet it makes but little impression upon them, because they do not understand the principles we go upon, nor the meaning of the terms we use, and must of necessity use, in the right preaching of it : which to me seems one of the chief reasons, why so many sermons in our days are preached to no purpose, except it be to aggravate the faults of those that hear them ; whereas, if the principles of our Holy Religion were first instilled into those which are young, as they grow in years, they would grow in grace too, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so by degrees would be rightly disposed and qualified both to understand and to receive the Word with all readiness of mind, and would profit more by any one sermon they hear, than others do by all, how many soever they be.

Upon these, among many other accounts, it is to be earnestly wished by all that love Christ and His religion, that the Rubrics and Canons of our Church concerning Catechising could be generally and duly observed. The Church of Christ would then put on another face, and true Primitive Christianity would soon be revived among us. For in the Book of Common Prayer, first composed and established by our Church, and then confirmed by the civil power in the last Act of Uniformity, immediately after the Catechism, we have these two Rubrics, that is, directions or rules to be observed.

“ The curate of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and holydays, after the second lesson at Evening Prayer, openly in the Church, instruct and examine so many of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of this Catechism.

“ And all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices (which have not learned their Catechism) to come to the Church at the

time appointed, and obediently to hear and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learned all that is here appointed for them to learn."

Where we may first observe, that in the Book of Common Prayer, set forth in King Edward the Sixth, and in Queen Elizabeth's reign, as also in the 59th Canon of our Church, the time appointed for catechising was half-an-hour before Evening Prayer; but now it is to be done after the second lesson at Evening Prayer, that those also of riper years which were not taught the Catechism in their youth (which though not heretofore, yet now make up the greatest part, if not the whole, of most congregations in England), may learn what they ought to believe and do, by hearing the younger sort examined and instructed in it.

Here we may likewise observe, that every curate or minister of every parish in England, is obliged by this law, not carelessly but "diligently," not privately but "openly," to examine and instruct some of his parish in some part of the Catechism every Sunday and holyday throughout the year: so that none can ever neglect or omit it upon those days, without manifest and wilful disobedience to the laws both of the Church and State under which they live, and that too in a thing which they are bound to do, out of duty to God, and to the people committed to their charge, although there was no such positive law for it. But howsoever lest any should be so stupid and insensible of their duty herein, as, notwithstanding all this, still to continue in the neglect of it, our Church in the foresaid Canon hath enforced it with the greatest penalty that she can inflict: for her words are these, "And if any minister shall neglect his Can. 59. duty herein, let him be sharply reprov'd upon the first complaint, and true notice thereof given to the Bishop or Ordinary of the place. If, after submitting himself, he shall willingly offend therein again, let him be suspended. If so

the third time, there being little hope that he will be therein reformed, then excommunicated, and so remain until he be reformed.”

But then we must observe withal, that as all ministers are bound to catechise every Lord's Day and holyday in their respective parish churches, so all fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, even every head of a family in every parish, are bound by the same law, to cause all in their respective families that have not yet learned the Catechism, whether children, servants, or apprentices, to come to Church at all such times, and there obediently submit themselves to be examined, instructed, and ordered by their minister, not only now and then, but constantly, until they have learned all that is here appointed. And to make them more careful to perform their duty herein, I wish they would consider the punishments which the Church hath declared to be due, and therefore decreed to be inflicted upon those who neglect it, in these words, “And likewise, if any of the said fathers, mothers, masters, or mistresses, children, servants, or apprentices, shall neglect their duties, as the one sort in not causing them to come, and the other in refusing to learn, as aforesaid, let them be suspended by their Ordinaries (if they be not children), and if they so persist by the space of a month, let them be excommunicated.”

Can. 59.

Another thing much to be observed in these laws is, that every minister is bound not only to teach the youth and ignorant persons of his parish their Catechism, and to examine whether they can say it, but he is bound likewise to “instruct them in it,” and to “examine” whether they understand it or no; and that too so long till they can all, according to their several abilities, give a good account of their faith, and of all the duties which God requireth of them.

Now if all this was duly and generally observed all the

kingdom over, what an excellent Church and people should we then become! Then the promise which God hath made to His Church in general would be fulfilled to ours particularly. For we should "all know Him from the least to the greatest of us." And if we knew Him aright we could not but serve, honour, and obey Him as we ought, and so live as becometh Christians, shining as lights in the world. Jer. 31. 34.

But this we can never expect, until it please God to open the eyes of parents and others, that they may see it to be both their duty and their interest to teach their children their Catechism as well as they can at home, and then to send them, together with their servants and apprentices, to be further instructed in it by the Minister of their parish, not only while they are six or seven years old, as the custom of late hath been, but till they come to years of discretion, so as to be able fully to understand all that is necessary for them to know, in order to their living in the true faith and fear of God all the while they are upon earth, and so to their obtaining forgiveness of their sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, that is, in Jesus Christ. Whatsoever they may think, I am sure they can do nothing more pleasing to God or of greater advantage to themselves: for by this means they may, upon good grounds, promise themselves a great deal of comfort in their children and families, together with God's blessing upon them; which otherwise they can never expect: in that they live in such a sin, for which the Church hath declared them worthy to be excommunicated, and requireth them to be so, if they continue in it.

And as for such (of which there are too many all over the kingdom) who never having learned the Catechism themselves, cannot teach it their children, they have more need to attend constantly when it is repeated and explained openly in the Church, and must take the more care to

send their children to the Minister of their parish, that he may teach them, and instruct them in it, whose duty it is to do it.

And it is indeed a very hard and difficult duty to do it effectually. It is easy enough, I confess, to hear children or others say their Catechism by rote. But that signifies very little, unless they understand what they say. But to make them understand every word and expression, as it is necessary they should, in order to their being fully instructed in it: this, I think, is one of the hardest duties belonging to the Ministerial Office. For it requires great presence of mind and quickness of invention, to explain every thing so as the weakest capacities may apprehend it. But how hard soever it is, it is necessary to be done. And therefore every Minister should study and strive all he can to do it, so as that it may answer the end for which it is appointed, and that he may give a good account of it at the Last Day.

For which purpose many have taken great and worthy pains in subdividing the Catechism into lesser Questions and Answers to be got without Book, and repeated by those who come to be examined and instructed in it. And that, doubtless, is of great use, if due care be taken that they do not make such answers, as they are apt to repeat the Catechism, only by rote, without understanding what is meant by them. But herein lies the main difficulty, even how to possess young and ignorant people with a clear understanding, right apprehensions, and a due sense of all that is contained in the Catechism; that they may become wise unto Salvation. Which every one should endeavour by all such ways and means which he finds or thinks will conduce most towards it, due consideration being had of the place where he lives, and of the circumstances of the persons that come to be examined and instructed by him.

The course that to me seems the most effectual to this purpose is, by giving them first a short, plain, and easy exposition of some one part of the Catechism, and then examining whether they understand what was said, by propounding such questions to them as had been resolved in the foregoing exposition. And where we find their understanding, or their memory, or both, to fail them, then to tell them the same thing over again in other words, such as we think most easy and familiar to them. And this not only at that time, but when they come next to be examined again; by which time their parents or some other that were present, may have helped them by repeating the same things so often to them that they may be able to give some tolerable account of them, considering each one's capacity and age. And if this course be continued so as to go over the whole Catechism in this manner once or twice a-year to the same persons, though they began young and ignorant, yet I doubt not but, by the blessing of God, they will at last come to have a right understanding in all things necessary to their Salvation, and to be fit to be confirmed by the Bishop, and then admitted to the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ our Saviour.

This therefore being the best way that I could ever yet find out whereby to catechise to good purpose, so as to attain the end of its institution, I have here given a specimen of it. I have drawn up a short exposition of the several parts of the Catechism in the plainest and easiest terms that (considering the nature of each subject) I could think of, still keeping to such words and phrases as are used in the Holy Scriptures, and by the Catholic Church in the interpretation of them, and explaining them if there was occasion, so that all may understand the meaning of them. I have, according to the wise and pious design of the Catechism, waved all manner of disputes and controversies, insisting only upon such things which are there propounded

as necessary for all Christians to believe and know. As our whole religion, summarily contained in this Catechism, is grounded upon God's Word, so I have all along shewed what places of His said Word each part of it is grounded upon, regard being had to the original text. I have divided the whole into so few parts, and made every part so short, that as the substance of all that is delivered in every part may be easily remembered, so the whole may be gone over in so short a time, that both they who are catechised, and all the people there present, may be often put in mind of all the principles of our Holy Religion, many whereof are seldom touched upon in our ordinary way of preaching. Lastly, to every part, I have subjoined such questions as are proper to be asked, and may be generally resolved from something that was before delivered in the exposition, if they to whom they are propounded did but attend to what they heard, and by the help of the Catechist understand it; which they will strive to do when they know that they shall be afterwards examined about it. By which means they will learn also by degrees to be more attentive at our Prayers and Sermons, as well as more affected with them than people commonly are.

But that this, or any other way that shall be taken, for the instructing children, may have its due effect, they must not only be taught the Catechism, while they are young and repeat it publicly for a while, and then leave it off again, perhaps in a year or two, but they must continue it for many years together. And though it may be proper to propound to them at first only one or two questions, such as the Minister shall think fit, under each head, yet, as they grow in years, and so are more capable, every thing that is necessary to be known in every part of the Catechism, should by degrees be made plain and easy to them, till they understand the whole, and are able to give a good account of any material question that can be propounded to them

out of it. But this cannot be done in a short time. They who are designed for any art or trade are generally seven years in learning the mystery of it, although they be usually sixteen or seventeen years of age before they begin. How then can children, before that age, be thought able to learn all the mysteries of our Holy Religion in less time? No, it is well if they can do it in so little: or rather, it is scarce possible they should, unless there be more than ordinary care and pains taken with them. The frequent repeating of the Catechism may imprint the words upon their minds. But to bring them to a right understanding and due sense of the matter contained in those words, will require a great deal of time, if not all they have, till they are fit to go out into the world, or at least are sixteen or seventeen years old. Neither do I see how it can be done in that time, unless the Minister performs his duty, as it is enjoined, every Lord's Day, or at least so as to go over the whole Catechism once, if not oftener, every year. For if he doth it only at one time of the year, as suppose in Lent, the children having forgotten what they learned the year before must always begin again, and so never come to the end. Whereas, if these great truths and duties be inculcated into them every Lord's Day, and so over and over again all along till they come to the foresaid years, or, if there be occasion, longer; they will, in all probability, make such impressions upon them as will stick by them as long as they live, and by the grace and blessing of God keep them always steadfast in the Faith, and sincere in their obedience to Him. And if this was thus constantly practised in every parish as it ought, the whole nation would soon find the happy effects of it. This being one of the best means that can be used for the reforming the many disorders that are in it, and without which it can never be done effectually.

I shall only add, that we having at this time so many worthy and learned men in our Church, I could heartily

wish they would all seriously consider how this great work may be best managed, so as to attain its end in their respective cures, as well as elsewhere; and accordingly set themselves in good earnest about it. I know not how they can employ their parts of learning to more advantage for the Church, their people, or themselves. But we can never expect to see it carried on effectually throughout the whole kingdom, unless some way could be found out to enforce the execution of the laws above-mentioned, so as to make it as much the interest as it is the duty of all parents and masters to send their children, servants, and apprentices to be instructed by their Minister in the Catechism, until they fully understand all the principles of our Holy Religion contained in it. But that being supposed, it may be easily done: for I doubt not but the Clergy would be all willing and ready to do their duty. And if any one refuse or neglect it, which God forbid, he may be compelled to it by his Ordinary. So that nothing would then be wanting to complete the work, but that every Bishop go through his whole diocese, as the law requires, at least once in every three years, to see how it hath been done, and to confirm those who have been thereby fitted and prepared for it. Without which all will come to nothing. For unless a Bishop doth his duty, or, in case of necessity, procure it to be done by another, both his Clergy and the people will be apt to neglect theirs; and the fault will, in great measure, lie at his door. Which therefore cannot be supposed of any who are sensible of the strict account they must give at the Last Day of all their actions, and especially of this, wherein the glory of God, the good of His Church, the Salvation of the souls committed to their care, and by consequence their own, is so highly concerned.

A CATECHISM :

THAT IS TO SAY,

AN INSTRUCTION TO BE LEARNED OF EVERY PERSON BEFORE
HE BE BROUGHT TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE BISHOP.

QUESTION. *What is your name?*

ANSWER. N. or M.

As there is no national Church upon earth but admitteth the children of believing parents to holy Baptism, so there is none we know of but hath some public catechism or summary of Christian doctrine for such children, so soon as they are able to learn : but there is no such catechism set forth by any Church (much less by any private person) that doth or can exceed this of ours ; which is so short, that the youngest children that can learn any thing at all, may learn and say it by heart, and yet so full, that the oldest Christians that are need know no more than what they are there taught to believe and do that they may be saved. For it contains all things necessary to salvation, and nothing else.

And in this it seems to excel most other, that as all persons are (or ought to be) baptized, not into any particular, but into Christ's Catholic Church ; so here they are not taught the opinions of this or any other particular Church or people, but the doctrine only of the Catholic Church ; nothing but what the whole body of Christians all the world over agrees in. If it may any where seem to be otherwise, it is in the doctrine of the Sacraments. But that also is

here worded with so great wisdom, caution, and temper, as not to contradict any other particular Church, but that all sorts of Christians, when they have duly considered it, may subscribe to every thing that is here taught.

From hence appears the excellency of this which our Church has set forth and calls ‘A Catechism,’ that is to say, ‘An instruction to be learned of every person before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop:’ for, when any are brought to be confirmed by the Bishop, they must, in the presence of God and of the congregation there present, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in their names at their baptism, ratifying and confirming the same in their own persons, and acknowledging themselves bound to believe and do all those things which their godfathers and godmothers then undertook for them: which they can never do with that judgment and discretion that is necessary to so solemn a work, unless they first know what those things are, and for that purpose have learned this Catechism, consisting of five parts, every one of which is necessary for every Christian to be instructed in; viz. 1. **OUR BAPTISMAL VOW**, or that solemn promise which we made when we were baptized;—2. **THE APOSTLES’ CREED**, wherein are contained all the articles of the Christian faith;—3. **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**, or the Moral Law, wherein the whole duty of man is declared in God’s Own words;—4. **OUR LORD’S PRAYER**, wherein we are taught, by Him, how to pray for all things needful for us;—5. **THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS** that Christ hath ordained in His Church. All which I shall endeavour, by His assistance, to instruct you in, that ye may understand the true sense of every word in this Catechism, and so all things necessary to your eternal salvation.

First, therefore, this Catechism being designed for such as are baptized in their infancy, as well as for other, that they may be taught, so soon as they are able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, they made then by their sureties, it was very proper to begin it with this question, ‘What is your name?’ Not only because their name being the first thing that children usually know, this is the easiest question that can be put to them, and there-

fore the fittest to be put first; but chiefly because it is a very proper introduction to the foresaid vow, which they made when they were baptized, and leads them directly to the articles of the Christian faith, and to the rules of holy life which they then promised to believe and observe.

For, whereas they have every one two names,—a Christian and a surname,—the latter they have from their natural parents of whom they were at first born, which is therefore properly the name of their family. But the other was given them by their spiritual parents, their godfathers and godmothers, when they were born again of water and of the Holy Spirit, and so were made Christians; which therefore, is called their Christian name, and is proper to every Christian person as such, as he is a Christian, that is to say, a disciple or a scholar of Jesus Christ, one who professeth to learn of Him and to believe and live as He hath taught in His Holy Word. This every one undertaketh and promiseth when he is baptized, or christened; that is, made a Christian, and therefore hath this his Christian name given him. Acts 11. 26.

Wherefore, as this is the only name we mean, when we ask this question, ‘What is your name?’ meaning your Christian name: so their answer to this question, by declaring their Christian name, naturally brings in all they promised in their Baptism, when this name was given to them: and therefore this is the most proper question that could be thought of to be first propounded to them.

From whence we may also observe, that every one’s Christian name, as it is the proper name of his person, it distinguisheth him from other Christians; and as it is a Christian name, it distinguisheth him from all other sorts of people, and so puts you in mind, that you are not Jews, or Turks, or Heathens, but Christians: that you are of that religion which Jesus Christ hath revealed and settled in the world; which being not only the best, but the only good and true religion professed upon the earth, you, who profess it, should be the best of men: so far exceeding all other in virtue and goodness, that no other people may so much as seem to be good and virtuous in comparison of you. You “name the Name of Christ,” and therefore you should

2 Tim. 2. 19. "depart from all iniquity." You are "called by Him out
 1 Pet. 2. 9. of darkness into His marvellous light," and therefore you
 Phil. 2. 15. should "shine as lights in the world." This your Christian
 name, whensoever you write, or read, or speak, or hear it
 mentioned, should put you in mind of.

QUESTIONS.

Wherein appears the excellency of this Catechism?

How many parts doth it consist of?

Why doth it begin with this question, 'What is your name?'

How many names have you?

Which is here meant?

Why is it called your Christian name?

What is a Christian?

What doth this name put you in mind of?

Q. Who gave you this name?

A. My godfathers and godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

They who bring a child to holy Baptism, are called his godfathers and godmothers, because they are the means of his being there regenerate, or born again of God. They also give him his Christian name, because that belongs to him only as he is a Christian, and so the child of God; and they gave him this name in his Baptism, or at the same time that he is baptized, because it is then that he is brought into this relation to God; so as to be made His child according to the tenour of the New Covenant, which God hath made with mankind in Jesus Christ, promising pardon, and peace, and grace, and His Own Fatherly care of, and provision for all those who repent and believe in Him.

Jer. 31. 33,
34; Heb. 8.
10-12.

And that this is the most proper time for it, appears also in that Abram had his name Abraham given him by God Himself, at the same time that he entered into Covenant with him, and ordained circumcision to be the outward sign or way whereby he and his posterity should be admitted into it. So that he had this new name given him the same day that he was circumcised, and that too by God's Own ap-

Gen. 17.
4-23.

pointment. From whence His Church could not but conclude, that it was His Divine will, that when any were circumcised, and so admitted into His Covenant, they should, at the same time, have the name given them by which they should ever after be called, to put them always in mind of the conditions of that Covenant which they were then admitted into.

And accordingly this was the constant practice of the Jewish Church all along to our Saviour's time; and therefore we read that John the Baptist had his name given him when he was circumcised, and so had Jesus himself. Which same Jesus having laid aside that troublesome and painful yoke of circumcision, and instead thereof instituted the most easy Sacrament of Baptism, to be the means or rite of admitting persons into His Church, and so into the aforesaid Covenant which God in Him hath made with mankind; therefore His Church hath ever since used to give every person that is baptized his name at the same time that he is baptized, and so admitted into the great privileges of the New Covenant, to be a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Luke 1. 59-63.
ch. 2. 21.

He is in baptism made a 'member of Christ,' because he is made a member of His Church. For Christ and His Church, or the Congregation of all Christian people, are one body, of which Christ is the Head, and all Christians are the members, every one in his place and station. Therefore we are said to be baptized into Christ, and by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, even into the body of Christ, and by that means are made the members of Christ; so as to be moved, influenced, and actuated, by that Holy Spirit which proceeds from Him, as the members of our natural bodies are by the spirits which flow originally from the head.

1 Cor. 6. 15;
12. 12-27.
Col. 1. 18.

Gal. 3. 27;
Rom. 6. 3.
1 Cor. 12. 13.

He is therein also made 'the child of God,' because at the same time that he is baptized, or born again of water, he is born also of God the Spirit, and therefore is His child, as having received "the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," that is, call God our Father. And besides, he that is the 'member of Christ,' is therefore also 'the child of God:' for Christ being the Son of God, all His members must needs stand in the same relation to God that He

John 3. 5.

Rom. 8. 15;
Gal. 4. 6.

doth, though in a lower degree, according to their capacities. Hence it is that, as it is He that gives them power to become the sons of God, so “He is not ashamed to call them brethren,” as He doth, because His Father is their Father also, and therefore theirs, because His.

John 1. 12.
Heb. 2. 11.
Matt. 25.
40; 28. 10.
John 20. 17.

And as every member of Christ is a child of God, so every child of God is ‘an inheritor,’ that is, an heir ‘of the Kingdom of Heaven:’ so as to have a just title to it, as an heir-at-law has to an estate upon earth; for “if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.” They are “joint-heirs,” or, as we may say, co-heirs, not with one another, as if the inheritance was to be divided amongst them: for here every child is an heir to the whole, having the same right and title to all the inheritance, as if he was the sole heir. But they are all and every one “joint-heirs with Christ,” Who is “heir of all things.” And therefore in Him they shall also every one inherit all things.

Rom. 8. 17;
Gal. 4. 7.

Heb. 1. 2.
Rev. 21. 7.

This is that which is here called ‘the Kingdom of Heaven,’ of which every child of God is the inheritor; which therefore consisteth not in the enjoyment of any one or more particular things, but of all things that God hath made, and of Him too that made them; and yet, to our unspeakable comfort, all that are duly baptized according to Christ’s institution, are thereby made heirs or inheritors of this Kingdom. It is settled upon them in their Baptism; and they shall hereafter have the full possession and enjoyment of it, unless, while they are in this world, they provoke their Heavenly Father to disinherit and cast them off, by not doing what they promised when they were baptized. What that is, we shall see in the answer to the next question, and thereby know how to prevent our being disinherited.

QUESTIONS.

Who are they whom ye call godfathers and godmothers?

Why are they so called?

Why did they give you your name?

Why did they give it in your Baptism?

How do you prove that to be a proper time for it?

What do you mean by your being a member of Christ?

How doth it appear that you were made so in Baptism?

How do you prove that you were then also made the child of God?

In what sense were you in baptism made an inheritor of the Kingdom of God?

In what doth the Kingdom of God consist?

May you not be disinherited?

What must you do to prevent it?

PART I. OF THE BAPTISMAL VOW.

Q. What did your godfathers and godmothers then for you?

A. They did promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the articles of the Christian faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same, all the days of my life.

ALL that naturally proceed from the first man being born in sin, are by nature the children of wrath, obnoxious to the displeasure of the Almighty God, with all the dismal effects and consequences of it. But when any of them are baptized, they are taken off from the old stock, the first Adam, and there grafted into, and so made members of Christ, the last Adam. And in Him they are received into the favour of God, made His children, and entitled to all the great blessings that He hath promised, both in this world and the next; which promise, He, for His part, will be sure to perform to them, if they do but continue to live as becometh His children, and according to the laws of that new state into which they are admitted. Eph. 2. 3. 1 Cor. 15. 45.

Which that they may, although they are bound to do it by the very nature of the state itself, and are admitted into it only upon that condition, yet to tie them more strictly to it, they must solemnly vow and promise it, before they can (except in some extraordinary cases) be baptized. If they be of riper years, they must make this promise every one for himself, in his own person: but if they be children, not

yet come to the use of their reason, they are allowed and required to do it by their godfathers and godmothers, who accordingly make this promise in the name of the child which they bring to be baptized.

They do not then make the promise for themselves, for that was done at their own Baptism; neither do they promise that the child shall do it, for that is not in their power, and therefore more than they can promise; but they make the promise in the child's name, as his proxies, so that the child doth it by them. The minister saith to each of them, 'Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the Devil and all his works?' &c. To which the child answers by them, 'I renounce them all.' The minister saith, 'Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty?' The child answers by them, 'All this I stedfastly believe.' Again, the minister saith, 'Wilt thou be baptized in this faith?' To which the child answers by them, 'That is my desire.' They speak the words, but they speak them only in the name of the child: so that he makes the answer in and by them.

As, when a king is crowned in his infancy, he takes the coronation oath by some deputed to take it in his name; and he is bound as much by it as if he took it himself. And in such tenures of land, where the heir cannot be admitted without doing homage, or swearing fealty to the head-landlord; if a child or minor doth it by his guardians, or they in his name, it is as good in law as when it is done by the heir himself in his own person.

The promise which his godfathers and godmothers thus make in the child's name, consisteth of three parts, or, as the child is here taught to answer, 'They did promise and vow three things in his name;' whereof the first is, that 'he should renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh.'

By the Devil we are here to understand that subtle serpent, who having tempted our first parents to eat of the forbidden fruit, and so brought them and their whole posterity into the same state of sin and misery with himself, he hath ever since domineered over all mankind, "carrying
2 Tim. 2. 26. them captive at his will," so long as they continue in their

natural state. Now, when any one is to change this state of nature for that of grace, wherein he will have power to overcome the Devil, he then promiseth to ‘renounce him,’ to disclaim his dominion, resist his temptations, and leave off all his works, such as he doeth himself, and tempts men to do; such as pride, rebellion, apostasy, hatred, malice, murder, lying, slandering, backbiting, hypocrisy, and all uncharitableness. These are properly ‘the lusts of the Devil,’ which our Saviour speaks of, and those ‘works of the Devil’ which He came to destroy, which all, therefore, that would be His Disciples must renounce; that is, avoid, forsake, and leave off, so as not to do them any more. And so they must renounce, too, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, that is, all things that are apt to draw off men’s minds from the other world, and fix them upon this: therefore called ‘pomps,’ because they make a great show, as the word imports, and appear great in the eyes of sinful men, but they have nothing in them of real goodness or satisfaction, and therefore called also ‘vanity,’ or emptiness. Such are the riches and honours, as they are called, of this world; which every one, therefore, that would be a Christian, must renounce, so as not to be covetous of the former, nor ambitious of the latter. He must “not love the world, nor the things that are in the world.” John 8. 44. 1 John 3. 8. ch. 2. 15.

He must also renounce, subdue, and avoid all the sinful lusts of the flesh; what they are, the Apostle tells us, saying, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest: which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” The renouncing of all which is the first thing that is here promised. Gal. 5. 19-21.

The second thing is, that he will ‘believe all the articles of the Christian faith:’ that is, all such doctrines as are revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, written by the inspiration of God, and are briefly contained in the following Creed. 2 Tim. 3. 16.

The third is, that ‘he will keep God’s holy will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his

life.' What they are, we shall see, God willing, when we come to the Ten Commandments, wherein they are all comprised.

QUESTIONS.

Why is any such promise made in baptism ?

In what sense do godfathers and godmothers make it in the name of the child ?

How many parts doth the promise consist of ?

What do you mean by the Devil and his works ?

What by the pomps and vanity of this wicked world ?

What by the sinful lusts of the flesh ?

In what sense did you promise to renounce all these ?

What are those articles of the Christian faith which you promised to believe ?

Where are they revealed ?

What are those Commandments of God which you promised to keep ?

Q. Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee ?

A. Yes verily ; and by God's help, so I will. And I heartily thank our Heavenly Father, that He hath called me to this state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray unto God to give me His grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end.

Although the promise which godfathers and godmothers make in the name of a child at his baptism, be, as we have seen, the child's own promise, and he is bound to perform it when he is come to years of discretion, as much as if he had made it in his own person, and with his own mouth, whether he afterwards own it or no : yet to make him the more sensible of it, so soon as he is capable, he is put in mind of it, and taught to acknowledge it with his own mouth : for when this question is put to him, ' Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe, and to do as they have promised for thee ? ' He answers, ' Yes verily ; and by God's help, so I will. ' He makes no doubt at all of it ; but positively affirms it to be a great truth, that he is bound to

believe and do all that was then promised in his name, saying, 'Yes verily.' And accordingly, in a most solemn manner, he now promiseth it over again with his own mouth, saying, 'And by God's help, so I will.' So that every time that a child saith his Catechism, he renews the said promise, and that too in the Name of God Himself, 'as God shall help him : ' which imprints upon his mind a sense of his own inability to do it of himself, and teacheth him to look up to God for His help and assistance in it, and to trust on Him, according to His promise, for it : not doubting in the least but that God will help him, and therefore saying confidently, 'Yes verily ; and by God's help, so I will.'

After this, to possess his mind with a due sense of God's mercy in admitting him into the Church of Christ ; and that he may learn betime to give God thanks for the same from the bottom of his heart, he is taught farther to say, 'And I heartily thank our Heavenly Father, that He hath brought me to this state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.' He looks upon Himself now as in the number of God's children, and therefore calls Him 'our Heavenly Father : ' and returns Him his most hearty thanks for bringing him 'into this state of Salvation ; ' that is, into such a state and condition of life wherein he may be saved, and shall certainly be so, if he doth but perform what he promised, when he was by baptism admitted or brought into it, and what he hath now promised again.

For, seeing God "addeth to the Church daily such as Acts 2. 47. shall be saved," he being now 'added to the Church,' is in the ready way to be saved, and therefore is properly in a 'state of Salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour : ' which he therefore adds, both because it is 'only through Jesus Christ' that he is brought into this state, and because it is a state of Salvation also 'only through Jesus Christ ; ' Whom he therefore calls 'our Saviour,' because He is the only Saviour of mankind, without Whom no man ever was ch. 4. 12. or ever can be saved.

But though he be now in a state of Salvation, unless he continue in it he cannot be saved. As they who were with Noah in the ark, the type of Christ's Church, were safe so long as they stayed there ; but if any of them had thrown

Mark 13.
13; Heb. 3.
14; Rev. 2.
26.
2 Cor. 3. 5.
Eph. 2. 7. 8.
2 Cor. 12.
9; Phil. 4.
13.

themselves overboard, they would certainly have perished. Wherefore the child is here taught to pray unto God for grace to 'continue in the same state,' not only for some time, but 'to his life's end;' without which he cannot be saved. But he cannot do that, nor any thing that is good, of himself, nor any other way than by the grace of God, through faith in Christ. And therefore he prays God to give him 'His grace,' to keep him stedfast in his true faith and fear as long as he lives, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

QUESTIONS.

Are you not bound to perform what your godfathers and godmothers promised in your name?

Do you now promise the same thing again yourself?

Why do you say, by God's help?

Why do you call God our Heavenly Father?

What do you mean by the state of Salvation?

Why do you call Christ our Saviour?

What must you do that you may be saved by Him?

Why do you pray to God to give you grace to do it?

PART II.—THE CREED.

CATECHIST. *Rehearse the articles of thy belief.*

ANSWER. *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth.*

OF the three things that are promised by every one that is baptized, the first, as we have seen, is, that he should renounce the Devil, the world, and the flesh: which he accordingly doth at the same time. Now the second is, that he should 'believe all the articles of the Christian faith:' which were therefore read to him before he was baptized; and he was asked, whether he believed every one of them? And he then answered, 'All this I stedfastly believe.' He then professed to believe them all in his own person, if he was of riper years; or if an infant, by his sureties. Wherefore the Catechist, or he that instructeth the

child in his Catechism, doth not here ask him, what are the articles of the Christian faith, nor whether he believeth them or no. But, taking it for granted that he both knoweth and believeth them, as he had professed at his Baptism, he only bids him, 'Rehearse,' or say them over again, saying, 'Rehearse the articles of thy belief;' those which thou didst profess stedfastly to believe when thou wast baptized, and which thou dost still believe, according to that profession. Upon which he repeats the same Creed to which he then gave his assent, and in which all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith are briefly contained, to the end that he may now be more fully instructed in them. Which that he may, it will be necessary to explain every word and expression in the said Creed.

The first words, 'I believe,' respect every one of the articles or parts of the Creed, as well as those two to which they are prefixed. And this every one saith for himself, in his own person, 'I believe:' not only, I think, I suppose, I hope, or the like; but, 'I believe;' that is to say, I heartily assent and consent, being fully persuaded of it, upon the testimony of God Himself, and, therefore, in the highest manner that I can be persuaded of any thing in the world. For though all creatures may deceive me, God neither will nor can. Wherefore, having His word for every thing con- Tit. 1. 2
tained in this Creed, although my finite and corrupt understanding cannot reach or comprehend it, yet I verily believe, I am fully persuaded of the truth and certainty of it, as I am that there is a sun in the firmament, although I know not what it is.

This is that true Christian belief or faith which the Apostle saith, is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11. 1. So that by it, I doubt no more of what God hath promised, and I therefore hope for, than as if I was already possessed of it: and the great things that He hath revealed, though I never saw, nor am able to comprehend them, yet they are as clear and evident to me as if I did. This being the way whereby God is pleased to convey such things into our minds, and whereby He doth it in the most powerful manner that can be, even by His Own infallible almighty Word.

He hath given us senses whereby to discern the figures, and colours, and other circumstances of bodies. And He hath given us reason whereby to govern ourselves in the affairs of this life. But as for the things that concern Himself and belong to our everlasting peace, for them He hath given us His Own Word as the ground of our belief; that there may be no place left for diffidence or doubting, but that we may rest fully satisfied in our minds about them: which we cannot always be, about what our senses seem to discover, and our reason to dictate to us. For we find by experience that they often fail us; but God's Word can never fail us.

Wherefore, as we make no doubt of such things as we see and hear every day; nor of such things as appear self-evident to our reason, as that the whole is greater than any part; nor yet of such things for which we have the concurrent testimony of many men, as that there are such places as France, and Spain, and India, though we never saw them: much less can we doubt of any of the articles of the Christian faith; as, that God made and governs the world; that His Son became man, and died for the sins of mankind; that He is now in Heaven, continually making intercession for us; and that He will come hither again at the Last Day to raise the dead and judge the world. For these and such-like Divine truths being revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures, we have the testimony of God for them, the Word of Truth itself; by which, when duly considered, and fixed upon our minds, we are possessed with so strong a persuasion, so firm and constant a belief of them, that all the faculties of our souls are thereby influenced, and inclined to act accordingly: so that he that believes in God cannot but love Him and fear Him, and trust on His word and promise.

I thus first 'believe in God:' for he that cometh to God,
 Heb. 11. 6. as I desire to do, "must believe that He is." And I accordingly believe there is such an invisible Being in and over
 John 4. 24. the world, which we call God, who is a Spirit, and therefore
 Luke 24. 39. without body, parts, or passions, but a most pure, simple, immutable, eternal Being, Jehovah, the Lord, the Lord of Sabaoth, that is, of the World, or of all things that are;

existing in and of Himself, in all things, above all things, Exod. 3. 14.
every where the same; of infinite wisdom, knowledge, good- Ps. 139.
ness, and all other perfections; and in Whom every perfec- 7-10.
tion is infinite, and Himself. "Such knowledge is too ver. 6.
wonderful for me, it is high, I cannot attain unto it." But
I believe it, because it is agreeable to the revelations which
He hath made of Himself to me in His Holy Word.

Thus I believe in One living and true God; the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I first believe in God the
Father, because He hath a Son, an Only Son, begotten of 1Thess. 1. 1.
Himself, therefore called "the Only-begotten of the Father," John 1. 14.
without which He could not properly be a Father: so that
I cannot believe in God the Father, but I must believe in
His Son too. And so I do, as you will see in the next
article.

I believe also that this God, the Father, is Almighty, that
is, I believe that He can do whatsoever He will. For "who Ps. 115. 3;
hath resisted His will?" Wherefore "with God all things 135. 6.
are possible," but only such things as He will not do; as Rom. 9. 19.
"He cannot lie;" "it is impossible for God to lie." So He Matt. 19. 26.
cannot deny Himself; He cannot die; He cannot do such
things, because He will not; and He will not, because if He
did, He would cease to be God; the doing of such things
proceeding from weakness and impotence. Neither is it
indeed doing any thing, but suffering; which is contrary to
His Divine nature. So that He is not the less Almighty
because He cannot do such things; but He therefore cannot
do them because He is Almighty, and cannot but always be
so: it being impossible that any thing should be ever im-
possible to Him, who can do what He will, only by willing
it should be done. Tit. 1. 2.
Heb. 6. 18.

For I believe further, that this God the Father Almighty
is 'the Maker of Heaven and earth.' For it is written, "In Gen. 1. 1.
the beginning God created Heaven and earth." That is, the
whole world: all things that are made, visible and invisible.
He created them all 'in the beginning,' and, therefore, out
of nothing. And He thus made all things as He would
have them to be, only by signifying it to be His will they
should be so. He only said, "Let there be light, and there ver. 3.
was light." Thus "by the Word of the Lord were the hea-

vens made, and all the hosts of them," that is, all things in them, "by the breath of His mouth."

Ps. 33. 6.

Neither did He only make all things at first, but He is still the Maker of them, by preserving and upholding all things in their being, by the same power, will, or word, by which He at first made them. So that "it is in Him we live, Heb. 1. 3. and move, and have our being." Acts 17. 28.

And seeing Almighty God made and preserveth, I cannot but believe that He governeth and disposeth of all and every thing that is, according to His Own will : the least thing, as well as the greatest, and every thing in particular, as well as all things in general. Insomuch that nothing can stir or happen in the world without His special providence : by which He ordereth every thing after such a manner as to make it tend to the advancement of His Own glory, to the good of the whole creation, and to the benefit of every particular person in it, who duly acknowledgeth, admires, and adores His infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in the first establishment and continual government of the world ; which God grant I may always do.

Matt. 10. 29, 30.

For "of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to Whom be glory for ever. Amen." Rom. 11. 36.

QUESTIONS.

- What do you mean by the articles of your belief?
- Why do we say, Rehearse them?
- What mean you by saying, I believe?
- What ground have you for this belief?
- What is belief or faith, according to the Apostle?
- What do you believe concerning God?
- What is God?
- Why do you believe in God the Father?
- Why is He said to be Almighty?
- What is meant by Heaven and earth?
- Out of what did God make them?
- How did He make them?
- Doth not He also preserve them?
- Who governs the world, and orders all things in it?
- How, or after what manner, doth God do it, and to what end?

And in Jesus Christ, His Only Son, our Lord.

As I believe in God, I believe also in Jesus Christ, according to His command. I believe in Him who is called John 14. 1. 'Jesus,' that is to say, the Saviour, because He saveth His people from their sins, and 'Christ,' that is, the Anointed, Matt. 1. 21. because He was anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with power, to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, in order to Acts 10. 38. His perfecting our Salvation.

He is first that great Prophet spoken of by Moses, Who Deut. 18. 15, 18; Acts 3. 22. hath all along revealed the Will of God to mankind, and foretold all things that were necessary for them to know, first, by His Spirit in the Prophets, then in His Own person, 1 Pet. 1. 11. Heb. 1. 1, 2. John 14. 26; 16. 13. and afterwards by His Apostles and Evangelists. All which His prophecies and Divine revelations are recorded in the books of the Old and New Testament, which therefore contain all things necessary to our Salvation.

He is also a Priest, an High Priest, the only true Priest 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. Heb. 3. 1; 8. 1. that ever was in the world, who could offer up a sacrifice, acceptable in itself, to God for the sins of mankind. The Levitical priesthood, with all its sacrifices, being only a type and shadow of His, who now once in the end of the world ch. 10. 1. ch. 9. 26. hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, that is, by offering up Himself upon the altar of the cross, as a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, by 1 John 2. 2. virtue whereof He continually maketh atonement, reconciliation, and intercession for us in Heaven, as our true High Priest, and "therefore is able to save them to the uttermost Heb. 7. 25. that come unto God by Him."

He is likewise a King, an Almighty King, the universal Monarch of the world, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." 1 Tim. 6. 15; Rev. 17. 14; 19. 16. For "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son," and hath given Him "all power both John 5. 22. Matt. 28. 18. in Heaven and earth," and that too not only for a long time, but for ever: "For of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1. 33. These are the three great offices to which Jesus was anointed for the perfecting of man's Salvation, and therefore was called Christ, or the Anointed.

And as I believe in God the Father, so I believe that this

John 1. 14,
18; 3. 16,
18; 1 John
4. 9.

Jesus Christ is His "Only Son," that Son of Whom He is there said to be the Father, as being truly begotten of Him, and therefore called His Only-begotten Son. And seeing He was begotten of the Father, I believe He is another, or a distinct Person from the Father, as a son must needs be from his father: but I believe withal, that He was so begotten of Him, that He is of one and the same Divine nature, essence, or substance with the Father, one and the same God.

John 5. 26.

For this He Himself hath revealed to me, where, speaking of His eternal generation from the Father, He saith, "For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." For none hath life in himself as the Father hath, but only the One living and true God: and therefore, seeing the Son hath life in Himself, as the Father hath, although it was communicated or given to Him of the Father, yet I cannot but believe it was so given Him, that He is that One living and true God that the Father is.

ch. 10. 30.

Especially having His Own word for it, saying, "I and the Father are One," not one person; but, as the word in the original importeth, one thing, one being, Jehovah, the Lord, as it is expressed Deut. vi. 4. By which name, Jehovah, proper only to the true God, the Son as well as the Father, is often also called in the Old Testament; and all along in the New, He is called "the Lord," as being "the true God," Who "is over all, God blessed for ever." And Who demonstrated Himself to be so, by the wonderful works which He did when He was upon earth: such as none could do as He did them, but only Almighty God; doing what He pleased, as God made the world only with His Word, Who therefore also did them, and caused them likewise to be recorded, that we might believe "that He is the Christ, the Son of God." And if the Son of God, then equal to God, and God Himself. For so the Jews, whose language He spoke, understood Him: insomuch that they accused Him of blasphemy, for saying that He was the Son of God, or that God was His Father; and so making Himself God, which they could not have done if it had not been the received opinion among them, that the Son of God was the self-same with God Himself.

Gen. 19. 24;
Hosea 1. 7,
&c.
1 John 5. 20.
Rom. 9. 5.

Matt. 8.
3-16, &c.

John 20. 31.

ch. 5. 18;
10. 33.

Neither is this contrary but agreeable to reason itself. For seeing God hath given power to His creatures to beget sons in their own likeness, every one of the same specific nature with his father; when God Himself begets a Son, His Son must needs be of the same nature with the Father, in a more eminent and Divine manner. Not only so as to be a God as well as the Father, for that is no more than what is common among men; the son of a man being in that sense a man as well as his father.

But when the Scripture, and we from thence, speak of God's begetting a Son, we cannot but believe it to be, in a much higher sense, the highest that can be. But we cannot, by all our reason, imagine an higher, nor any other becoming His Divine and indivisible essence, than that His Son is of the same individual nature or essence with the Father, one and the same God that the Father is, according as He is declared to be in the Holy Scriptures.

Wherefore when I say, that 'I believe in Jesus Christ, His Only Son,' or the Only Son of God the Father; I thereby profess that I believe the said Jesus Christ to be truly God, of one substance with the Father: which I must necessarily believe, as ever I desire to be saved. For I can never believe that any one can save me but He that made me; the Salvation of mankind being certainly as Divine a work as the creation of the world: and therefore I must of necessity believe Christ to be God, for otherwise I cannot believe in Him as my Saviour, or that He is able to save me, that being more than any one or all the creatures in the world can do. But, blessed be His Name for it, there is no one article of our faith more clearly revealed to us than this is; and therefore I hope He will always keep me stedfast in the belief of it to my life's end, that, believing and trusting on Him for all things needful to my Salvation, I may then receive the end of my faith, even the Salvation of my soul, by the same "God my Saviour."

Luke 1. 47.

And I further believe that this Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, is 'our Lord.' He is 'our Lord,' as He is the Son of God our Maker; as He is Jesus our Saviour; and as He is Christ our King. He hath absolute dominion over the whole creation, but is, in a peculiar manner, the Lord of all

Titus 2. 14.
John 13. 13.

1Cor. 6. 20.

those whom He hath redeemed and purchased to Himself. To whom He therefore saith, "Ye call Me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am," and I now, looking upon myself as in the number of them, call Him not only *my*, but '*our* Lord,' and desire accordingly to serve and glorify Him both in my body and in my spirit, which are His.

QUESTIONS.

Why is the Son of God called Jesus, or the Saviour?

Why is He called Christ, or the Anointed?

What was He anointed with?

To what offices was He anointed?

How do you prove that He was a Prophet?

Wherein did He, and still doth, manifest Himself to be a Priest?

What kind of King is He?

Of whom was He begotten?

Is He a distinct person from the Father?

Is He of one substance with the Father, or one and the same God that He is?

How do you prove that?

Did not His works shew it?

Is this contrary to reason?

Is it not necessary to believe that He is the true God?

Why do you call Him '*our* Lord?'

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

Although Jesus Christ was, from all eternity, begotten of God the Father, in so wonderful and Divine a manner, that He Himself is one and the same God with the Father, yet in time He was pleased to become man too, like unto us, by being conceived and born into the world as other men are, but in a manner quite different from all other; as it was necessary He should be, that so He might be free from that original sin that all are subject to, who are conceived and born the ordinary way: wherefore, although He was conceived, it was not, as other men are, by the help of man, but

‘by the Holy Ghost:’ and though He was born of a woman, that woman was not like other women that bear children, but a virgin, ‘the Virgin Mary.’

I believe He ‘was conceived by the Holy Ghost,’ because of the Angel’s word sent from God to acquaint the said virgin with it. For when He had said to her, “Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus:” the Blessed Virgin wondering how that should be, seeing she knew not a man, He answered and said to her, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, Luke 1. 35. and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.” To which she having given her consent, by saying, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be ver. 38. it unto me according to Thy word,” I believe, as the Angel then departed from her, so the Holy Ghost came accordingly upon her, and by His Almighty power, that “Holy Thing” was then conceived in her; as the Angel told Joseph also, to whom the said virgin was espoused: for he, finding her after this to be with child, and therefore thinking to put her away privily, the Angel said to him, “Fear not to take Matt. 1. 20. unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”

And as He was thus conceived by the Holy Ghost, so I believe He was ‘born of the Virgin Mary:’ for it being in her womb that He was conceived, He could be born of no other but of her, and she must needs be a virgin still, in that she had conceived no otherwise than by the immediate power of God: for which reason also the Son of God is said to be “made of a woman,” in that he, the second or last Gal. 4. 4. Adam, was formed out of her substance, as the first Adam was out of the dust of the ground by God himself. Gen. 2. 7.

Now seeing the only Son of God, or, which is the same, God the Son, was thus conceived and born of a woman, I believe that He thereby became the Son of Man too, or really and truly man. As St. John saith, “the Word,” or John 1. 14. Son of God, “was made flesh, and dwelt among us;” and St. Paul, Jesus Christ “being [or subsisting] in the form Phil. 2. 5-7. [or nature] of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon

Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men," that is, of the same nature that all men are of, consisting of a reasonable soul and human flesh, with all the faculties, members, and qualities that are proper and essential to either of them singly, or to both as united together: as likewise with all the infirmities incident to mankind in general. He ate, He drank, He slept; He was hungry, and thirsty, and weary, and the like, but all without sin, and such effects or consequences of it as particular men are subject to: so that as He was truly God, He was now as

¹ Tim. 2. 5. truly "the Man Christ Jesus," "the man," man in general,
¹ Cor. 15. 47. and the "second man," the whole nature of man being as fully in Him as it was in the first man Adam.

But this the whole nature of man, thus assumed by the Son of God, having never subsisted of itself out of His Divine Person, but being taken into it at its first formation or conception in the womb; it could not make a person of itself, distinct from the divine, no more than the body that is formed together with the soul of a man, can make an human person without it. Wherefore, although I believe that Jesus Christ being begotten from all eternity of the Father, is truly God; and being born in time of a woman, is truly man; yet I do not believe that He is one Person as God, and another Person as man, but that He is both God and man in one and the same Person: according as I am taught in the profession of faith, commonly called the Creed of Athanasius, where it is said, that Jesus Christ, 'although He be God and man, yet He is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God; one altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ.'

And I further believe that it is necessary for me to believe this, even that Jesus Christ is thus God and man in one Person, or that He is but one Person both as God and man: because it is upon this that the virtue and efficacy of His sufferings for me chiefly depends. For if He had been one Person as God, and another as man, then all His sufferings as man would have been the sufferings only of an

human, a finite person, and so would have terminated in Himself, without affecting any, much less all other men: neither would they have been any way proportionable to, or satisfactory for, sins committed against the Infinite and Eternal God.

Whereas He being both God and man in one Person, though He suffered only in His manhood, yet His sufferings were of infinite value and merit for all men, because they were the sufferings of an Infinite, a Divine Person. Inso-much that when they killed Him, they “killed the Prince of Acts 3. 15. Life.” They crucified “the Lord of Glory,” and His blood 1 Cor. 2. 8. was the “blood of God,” and therefore must needs be of Acts 20. 28. sufficient worth and virtue to wash away all our sins; “hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down 1 John 3. 16. His life for us.” This I am taught to believe also in the Creed itself; for seeing the same person who is here called the only Son of God, the same was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, He must needs be still one and the same Divine Person, after He was conceived and born, that He was before.

QUESTIONS.

Why was Christ conceived and born in a different way from other men?

How was He conceived?

Why do you believe that He was so conceived?

Of whom was he born?

How do you prove that she was a virgin?

Did He thereby become a real man?

Was He not then two persons, one as God and another as man?

Is it necessary to believe that He is both God and man in one person?

How do you prove He is so from the Creed?

Is it necessary to believe this?

How do you prove that it is so?

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into Hell.

When Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, was thus mi-

raculously conceived and born into the world, He afterwards grew up by degrees, as other men do, to the ordinary stature of a man; living all the while in a private condition, till He was about thirty years of age. But then being baptized by John the Baptist, and anointed by the Holy Ghost, He after that appeared publicly in the land of Judea, in the time that Tiberius Cæsar was emperor of Rome, and Pontius Pilate was under him, governor of Judea, whose name was, therefore, put into the Creed, that mankind may always know in what age of the world Jesus Christ lived, and how He came to die upon a cross: that being a kind of death that was never inflicted upon any by the Jews, but only by Roman governors, such as Pontius Pilate was.

Under this Pontius Pilate, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being now also a man, as such He lived a most holy life, and went about doing good and working miracles, to shew forth His Divine Power and Godhead: yet, nevertheless, He ‘suffered,’ that is, He underwent a great deal of trouble and sorrow in the world; not for Himself, for He never sinned, and therefore could never suffer for any thing that He Himself did. But having taken our nature upon Him, He suffered for us, and for our sins, which were laid upon Him. He suffered reproach in His name, grief in His heart, pain in His body, and all manner of affronts and indignities that were offered Him. He was apprehended, arraigned, accused, and condemned as a malefactor. He was scourged, He was stripped, He was mocked, He had a crown of thorns put upon His bare head, He was spit upon and abused, as if He had been the worst of men.

All this, ‘He suffered under Pontius Pilate;’ by whose order He was also crucified:’ that is, a straight piece of timber being set fast in the ground, with a cross beam towards the upper end of it, His hands were fastened with nails, the one to the one side, and the other to the other side of the said cross beam, and His feet to the straight timber that stood in the ground, His body being sustained or held up by a little piece of wood that jetted out for that purpose about the middle of the said timber. In this most painful and ignominious posture, He hung for several hours toge-

ther; and all for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the Law, by being made a curse for us; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. 3. 13; [Deut. 21. 23.] From whence I believe it was necessary to our redemption, that He should not only suffer in general, but that He should also suffer upon the cross, or be crucified; that so He might, in our stead, undergo that curse which God had denounced 'against every one that continueth not in all things written in His law,' and therefore against every one of us. Gal. 3. 10; Deut. 27. 26.

But for that end, it was necessary that He should not only be crucified or nailed to the cross, but that He should die too. For God hath said, that he will punish every sin or transgression of His law with death. But all men are guilty of sin, and, therefore, as such, are bound over by God's Own Word to suffer death. Neither do I see how it can be possible, according to the revelations that God hath made of Himself and His will to us, that any one should escape this death which God Himself hath threatened, unless some other hath undergone it in His stead. But this none was ever capable of doing for us, but only Jesus Christ: He being the only man that never sinned Himself; the only man in general who had the whole nature of man in Him, and so could suffer for any or for all that are of that nature; and the only man, too, who was God as well as man, and so could suffer as much, yea, more, in their nature, than all the men in the world could ever do in their own persons; and so was every way qualified to undergo the death which God had threatened, in our stead, and so to make satisfaction to the Law, to the justice, to the word, and to the truth of God for us, that we, by Him, may not only escape death, but likewise attain eternal life. Gen. 2. 17; Rom. 6. 23.

For this purpose, therefore, He was not only crucified, but dead too; that is, He hung upon the cross so long, till at length 'He gave up the ghost,' or died, and so offered up Himself as a sacrifice to God, for the sins, and in the stead, of all mankind. For "He died for our sins;" He was a "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;" "He gave Himself a ransom for all," or instead of all; "He tasted death for every man;" for He took not on Him the person, or the Matt. 27. 50; Luke 23. 46. 1 Cor. 15. 3. 1 John 2. 1, 2. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9.

nature, of any one or more particular men only, but the nature of man in general, that which all and every man is of. And, therefore, the death which He suffered in that nature must needs be for every one that is of that nature; so that there is no man but may be saved by it, if he will but

John 3. 16. believe in Him as he ought.

Jesus Christ being thus ‘dead,’ I believe further that He
 1 Cor. 15. 4. was ‘buried;’ that is, His body being now bereaved of its
 soul, it was laid in a grave, tomb, or sepulchre, in the ground,
 Matt. 27. 60. by Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a ruler of the
 John 19. 39. Jews. But in His soul He ‘descended into Hell.’ For
 though as He was God, the penitent thief was to be with
 Luke 23. 43. Him in Paradise the same day He died, yet as man He did
 John 20. 17. not yet ascend unto the Father. But He Himself, in
 Ps. 16. 10; David, said unto the Father; “Thou wilt not leave My soul
 Acts 2. 27. in Hell.” From whence I cannot but believe also that He
 went to Hell, although the end for which He went thither
 be not clearly revealed by God, and therefore not necessary
 to be known or determined by us. Be sure He suffered
 nothing there; for He had suffered enough before for our
 redemption; as He shewed also, in that all the power of
 Hell was not able to keep Him there; which might be one
 great end of His going thither; even to shew that He had
 suffered the extremity of the Law, paid the uttermost far-
 thing, and so made complete satisfaction for us.

QUESTIONS.

Who was Pontius Pilate?

Why was his name put into the Creed?

What did Jesus Christ suffer under him?

For whom did He suffer?

What do you mean by His being crucified?

Why was He crucified?

Did He die upon the cross?

Why was it necessary that He should die?

For whom did He die?

What was done to His body after His death?

Whither went His soul?

What ground have you to believe it went to Hell?

The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into Heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

Although Jesus Christ died, was buried, and descended into Hell, and so was truly in the number of the dead for some time, yet He afterwards ‘rose again from the dead;’ that is, the same soul that departed from His body upon the cross, was again united to the same body, so that He revived and became alive again, as He was before He died. For this is attested by all the Evangelists, and many others who saw him and conversed with Him after He was risen again, Acts 13. 30, yea, and saw the prints of the wounds which the nails, 31; 1 Cor. 15. 4, 5, &c. wherewith he was fastened to the cross, had made in His hands and feet, and which the spear wherewith He was Luke 24. 39. pierced, had made in His side, whereby they were fully John 19. 34. assured that it was the very same body which they had seen ch. 20. 27. before upon the cross.

Neither do I only believe that Christ rose again from the dead, but that He rose again ‘the third day,’ that is, the third day from or after His death inclusively, the day on which He died being reckoned for one, and the day on which He rose for another, according to the common way of speaking among all people, and particularly the Jews. 1 Cor. 15. 4. And I further believe, that as He died for us, so He likewise rose again for us. “For He was delivered for our Rom. 4. 25. offences, and raised again for our justification.”

But for that purpose, after He was risen from the dead, He continued only forty days upon earth, and then ‘He Acts 1. 3. ascended into Heaven;’ that is, He in that soul and body which He had assumed, and in which He died and rose again, He, in the same soul and body, and so in the whole nature of man united to His Divine Person, was taken from the earth and carried up to that high and holy place which we call Heaven, where the glorified Saints and Angels live and enjoy God. And He was no sooner there, but He was set ‘at the right hand of God;’ that is, He was made much better than the Angels. “Angels, and authorities, Luke 24. 51; Acts 1. 9-11. and powers, being made subject to Him.” For God hath Mark 16. 19. Heb. 1. 3, 4. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Phil. 2. 9-11. there “highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is

Eph. 1. 20-22.

above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Yea, God hath now "set Him at His Own right hand, in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church."

Matt. 28. 18.

John 5. 22, 23.

1 Tim. 6. 15.

Matt. 16. 18.

Rom. 8. 28.

Thus the man Christ Jesus, immediately upon His ascension into Heaven, 'was set at the right hand of God,' advanced to the highest degree of honour in the world, and vested with absolute and supreme authority over all things in it. "All power is given to Him both in Heaven and earth." For "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." So that He is now "Lord of lords, and King of kings, the only Potentate;" the universal Monarch of Heaven and earth; the Governor of all the creatures in the world. They are all and every one not only in His hand, but under His feet, that He may do and deal with them as He pleaseth: for He is "Head over all things;" and that also "to the Church;" for the good and benefit of the Church, which He hath purchased with His Own blood; and therefore we may be sure He takes care that, according to His promise, "the gates of Hell should never prevail against it," which they would certainly do, if He had not such absolute dominion over them and all things else; that as the Father ordereth all things for the good of the world in general, so Christ the Son doth the same for his Church in particular, that all things may work together for the good of that, and of every sound member in it.

Ps. 110. 4;
Heb. 7. 17.
ver. 24, 25.

And as Jesus Christ, being set at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, is Himself also an Almighty King, and can do whatsoever He will; so He sits there likewise as a Priest, "a Priest for ever." He hath "an unchangeable priesthood, ever living to make intercession for them who come unto God by Him." For them He intercedeth,

but for none else. Though we often read that He died for all, it is nowhere written that He maketh intercession for all. But He Himself saith He doth not, where, speaking to His Father of such as believe in Him, He saith, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world." And that is the reason why, though He died for all, yet all are not saved by His death, because they will not believe in Him, nor come unto God by Him, and therefore He doth not apply the merits of His death to them, by making intercession for them: but for all true believers He intercedes with the Father, that they may be justified and saved by virtue of that great propitiation which He hath made for the sins of the world. And the Father always hearing Him, they are all accordingly justified and saved by Him, or through His mediation and intercession for them, Who is the "only Mediator between God and men."

John, 17.
9; See also
Matt. 10. 32,
33.

John 11. 42.

1 Tim. 2. 5.

Where by 'His mediation or intercession,' I do not understand any formal request or supplication that He maketh to the Father for us, but His appearing before Him in our nature and in our behalf. As it was typified in the old law, when the high-priest went on the day of expiation into the most holy place, he only carried some of the blood of his sacrifice with him, and sprinkling it about, he thereby made atonement and reconciliation for himself and the people: so Christ having offered up Himself in our nature for the sins of the world, He in the same nature entered into Heaven, and in it "appeareth there in the presence of God for us," and thereby maketh atonement, reconciliation, and intercession for us; His body being there a standing monument of the great propitiation that He hath made for our sins. So that God the Father having that always in His eye, is pleased to receive us into His grace and favour, only upon His Son's appearing so before Him in our behalf, and willing to have the merits of His death applied to us for our pardon and salvation. According as He prayed also when He was upon earth, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am."

Lev. 16.
15-17.

Heb. 9. 24.

John 17. 24.

This intercession, I believe, Jesus Christ is continually making in Heaven for all His faithful people upon earth. For He was not only set there at first, but, as it is in the

Creed, 'He sitteth at the right hand of God : ' He sitteth there at this time, and at all times continually : and so never ceaseth to make intercession for us : but we may always say, "He now appeareth in the presence of God for us." Hence it is, that although the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world be continually offended by all men upon earth ; yet He is good and kind unto them all : but infinitely gracious and merciful to such as repent and believe the Gospel, because they have a Mediator or Advocate sitting continually at His right hand, and interceding there so effectually for them, that their sins are all pardoned, and God is perfectly reconciled to them. They are justified or accounted righteous in His sight. Their prayers are heard, and whatsoever they ask in His Name, if it be good, it is certainly done for them. They are continually sanctified, directed, and assisted by His Holy Spirit ; so that they "can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth them." And all the good works they do, though imperfect in themselves, yet are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Acts 5. 31 ; 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Heb. 7. 25. John 14. 2. Rev. 7. 10. John 1. 29.

1 Pet. 2. 5. "Who therefore is able to save to the uttermost them who come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them," and is "preparing a place for them in His Father's house," where they will all join together in praising Him for bringing them thither, saying, "Salvation to our God Which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb : " "the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world."

QUESTIONS.

What do you mean by Christ's rising from the dead ?
 How do you prove He did so ?
 In what sense did He rise the third day ?
 For what purpose did He rise again ?
 What part of Him went up to Heaven ?
 Where did He sit when He came there ?
 What do you understand by His sitting at the right hand of God ?
 What power hath He there ?
 To what end is it given Him ?
 What doth He do there ?

For whom doth He intercede?

What do you mean by His mediation or intercession?

How doth He make it?

How often doth He intercede for us?

What benefits do we receive thereby?

From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

It is now about 1670* years since Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, where He hath been ever since, and is now, sitting at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. But He shall one day ‘come from thence;’ that is, He shall come from Heaven to earth again. As the two Angels acquainted His Apostles at His ascension, saying, “Ye men of Galilee, Acts 1. 11. why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into Heaven.” He went to Heaven in a cloud, with an innumerable company ver. 9. of holy Angels surrounding and attending upon Him. And so He will come again from thence “in great glory;” for all the holy Angels shall come along with Him. He shall come Matt. 25. 31. again “with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and 1 Thess. 4. with the trump of God;” for “He shall send His Angels 16. Matt. 24. 31. with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.” Then the dead shall be raised, and all mankind shall see the Son of Man thus “coming in the ver. 30. clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.” What a glorious sight will that be!

But “of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the Matt. 24. 36. Angels of Heaven, but the Father only.” God hath been pleased to conceal it from all the world, that all the world may be in daily expectation of it. But this we know, that it shall be at the end of the world. It shall be the last day ch. 24. 3. that the world shall continue in that state and form it is now in. For “the Heaven and the earth which now are, by the same word” whereby they were made, “are kept in 2 Pet. 3. 7. store, reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.” But “the day of the Lord will ver. 10. come as a thief in the night, in the which the Heavens shall

* This exposition of the Catechism was first published in the year 1704.—Editor.

pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up."

At that day the Lord Jesus shall come from Heaven to judge the world, as He came at first to save it. For the
 John 5. 22. "Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment
 ver. 27. to the Son," and hath "given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man." Yea, He
 Acts 17. 31. hath appointed "the day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." It is God therefore that will judge the world, but He will do it by the Man Christ Jesus, Who, as man, now sitteth at the right hand of the Father, above all the creatures in the world; and as man too, at the Last Day, will execute His authority over them, by passing judgment upon them. So that we shall then see our Judge in our own nature, and hear Him pronouncing sentence upon us, which we may be confident shall be most perfectly just and righteous, in that although He doth it as man, yet He that doth it being God too, as such He is perfectly acquainted with every thing that we, or any creature in the world, ever thought, or spake, or did.

Thus therefore the Lord Jesus shall "judge the world," that is, He shall review and examine all men's lives, and call every one to account for all his actions from first to last, whether secret or open: for "God will bring every work to judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or
 Eccles. 12. 14. whether it be evil," and will "judge the secrets of men by
 Rom. 2. 16. Jesus Christ." And He Himself hath told us, that "every
 Matt. 12. 36. idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof at the Day of Judgment," and so they shall of their not doing what they ought, as well as of their doing what they ought not. All this He will then examine, not as if
 ch. 25. 42, &c. He did not know it before, but that all other men may know that He knew it, and so their own consciences likewise may witness for or against them. After which He will pronounce judgment upon all; justifying the righteous, and
 ver. 46. condemning the wicked. And "these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

He shall thus judge "both the quick and the dead," that is, both those who shall be quick or alive at the time of His coming, and those who died before, and so shall be then dead. There will be doubtless many then living upon earth, perhaps as many, if not more than there are now: these therefore shall not sleep, or die, but "they shall all be changed." The righteous which shall then remain alive, shall, together with those who died before in Christ, be caught up "in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." And all others shall be changed too; for they shall be summoned to appear before His judgment-seat, and be there adjudged by Him to their eternal state. And so shall the apostate angels too, for "they [also] are reserved unto the judgment of the great day." This they themselves know, and that Jesus Christ also shall be their Judge. As appears from their saying to Him, "Art Thou come to torment us before the time?"

Acts 10. 42;
2 Tim. 4. 1;
1 Pet. 4. 5.

1 Cor. 15. 51.

1 Thess. 4.
17.

2 Pet. 2. 4;
Jude 6.

Matt. 8. 29.

And as all that shall be then alive, so the dead too shall be then judged: for they shall all be raised up to life again. Adam himself and his whole posterity; every one that ever lived upon the face of the earth, or ever shall. We shall all then meet together in a body. For "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

QUESTIONS.

- From whence will Christ come?
- How will He come?
- When will He come?
- What will He come to do?
- What do you mean by His judging the world?
- What will be the issue of His judging it?
- Whom do you understand by the quick and dead?
- Shall the devils or fallen angels be then judged?
- Shall all mankind be judged, and you and I among the rest?
- How do you prove that?

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

The first words of the Creed, 'I believe,' which have hitherto served to all the articles concerning God the Father and God the Son, are here repeated concerning God the Holy Ghost; that we may the more clearly and expressly declare our belief in Him, in the same way and manner as in the other two Divine Persons. And accordingly, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost,' as a distinct Person from the Father and the Son, but of one Divine Essence or Substance with them.

I believe, first, that He Who in the Scriptures is called the Holy Ghost, that is, the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, is not the same Person that is called the Father, nor the same that is called the Son, but that He is a Person, in Himself, distinct from both them. This I believe, not only because they are all Three, and He among them, often named together as Three distinct Persons, but likewise because He is said to be sent in the same sense, after the same manner, and at the same time, both by the Father and the Son. Which plainly shews that He is a distinct Person from both, and also that He comes or proceeds from both, from the Son as well as from the Father, as appears also from His being called the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, and from His being said to receive of the Son, all which is the same thing in effect, which we otherwise call His proceeding from Him.

Wherefore, although He be nowhere in the Scripture expressly said to proceed from the Son, as He is said to proceed from the Father; yet it is so plainly implied, and so necessarily inferred from those other expressions, that I cannot but believe that He proceedeth both from the Father and the Son; only with this distinction, that the Father hath the Spirit proceeding from Him, in and of Himself; whereas the Son hath it in Himself but of the Father, of Whom He was begotten, and so received all He is or hath as God, and therefore this too, even the Spirit's proceeding from Him: as He Himself also intimates, where He saith,

Matt. 28.
19; 2 Cor.
13. 14; 1
John 5. 7.

John 14. 26;
15. 26; 16.
7.

Rom. 8. 9;
1 Pet. 1. 11;
Gal. 4. 6.
John 16. 14,
15.

ch. 15. 26.

ch. 16. 15.

"All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore, said

I, He, the Holy Spirit, shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you."

But as the Son was so begotten of the Father as to be one God with Him, the Holy Ghost so proceedeth from the Father and the Son, that He is one and the same God that they are. For there is but one God, and the Holy Ghost is often declared to be that one God, as well as the Father and the Son. When St. Peter had said that Ananias had "lied to the Holy Ghost," in the next verse he saith, that he had "lied to God." St. Paul saith, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and again elsewhere, he saith, that the bodies of the saints are "the Temples of the Holy Ghost," Acts 5. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 3. 16. ch. 6. 19. which could not be unless the Holy Ghost be God: for it is God's inhabitation only that makes a place to be a temple; at least, to be a Temple of God.

The same thing appears also from our Saviour's saying, that the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. What that is, we may learn from the occasion of His speaking it. He had cast out a devil "by the Spirit of God." Matt. 12. 22-28. ver. 24. ver. 31. The Pharisees said, He did it "by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils," upon which our Lord saith, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men," and the reason why He said so was, "because they Mark 3. 30. said He hath an unclean spirit." From whence it appears, that the sin against the Holy Ghost is properly that kind of blasphemy when a man saith, that the works which Christ did by the Spirit of God were done by the Devil, and so, in effect, calls the Spirit of God a devil, an unclean spirit, and, by consequence, Christ himself an impostor: which, if true, no sin could be forgiven: and then it is no wonder if that shall never be so; at least to those who, living at that time, saw Christ do His wonderful works, and yet had the impudence to blaspheme that Holy Spirit by which He did them.

Whether any in this age can be guilty of this sin as they were, I shall not determine: but am sure it behoveth all men to keep as far from it as they can, and for that purpose never to blaspheme, or say any thing against God's Holy

Spirit, that so they may be sure never to fall into the unpardonable sin: which, although it be not therefore unpardonable because He is God, yet unless He was God, it could not be unpardonable. And therefore this is an undeniable argument of His Godhead. And all had best take care how they deny it, and so blaspheme the Holy Ghost.

There are many other places all over the Bible where the Holy Ghost is expressly called ‘God,’ and Jehovah, ‘the Lord:’ and where the works and properties of God, such also as are incommunicable to any creature, are attributed unto Him: and which by consequence demonstrate the Holy Ghost to be the one living and true God so clearly, that I cannot but believe this as firmly as any article of our Christian faith.

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Neither can any doubt of it, who believe the Holy Scripture to be the Word of God, or to be “given by inspiration of God.” For the God Whose Word it is, and by Whose inspiration it was given, is the Holy Ghost. It was He that spake in and by the Prophets, or they by Him, by His direction and inspiration. “David said, by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said unto my Lord;” “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet;” “As the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear His voice.” Wherefore when the prophets say, “Thus saith the Lord,” their meaning is, ‘Thus saith the Holy Ghost,’ as the prophet Agabus expressed it, which is so full a demonstration of His Godhead, that I see no place left to doubt of it.

Hence, therefore, ‘I believe,’ according as this article is explained in the Nicene Creed, ‘I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life,’ or rather, according to the Greek, ‘the Lord and the Giver of Life.’ For He is not here said to be the Lord of Life, as he is the Giver of it (as our English translation may be misconstrued), but the Lord in general, Jehovah, the Almighty God; and the Giver, the Maker, the Author of Life, of all life, both natural and spiritual. ‘Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified,’ as being of one substance, power, and glory with them; “Who spake by the prophets.” To

John 6. 63.

Whom we are therefore obliged for all the revelations that God hath made of Himself and His will to mankind, by any of the Prophets since the world began. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." According as our Saviour said to His Apostles, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you." 2 Pet. 1. 21. Matt. 10. 20.

QUESTIONS.

- Why do you here say again, I believe?
- What do you mean by the Holy Ghost?
- Is He the same Person with the Father and the Son?
- From whom doth He proceed?
- Is He one God with the Father and the Son?
- How do you prove that?
- What is the sin against the Holy Ghost?
- What hath He done for us?
- How do you prove that He spake by the Prophets?
- What is meant by His being the Lord and Giver of Life?
- How were the Holy Scriptures given us?

The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the Forgiveness of Sins.

By the word 'Church,' I here understand the company or congregation of all such people as profess to believe in the true God, and to worship and serve Him, according to the revelations that He hath made of Himself and of His will to them. Some such people I believe there always have been in the world; and therefore a Church in all ages, since the beginning of it. In the middle age between the first and last Adam, God was pleased to reveal Himself in a more especial manner to Abraham; and to promise that Christ, the last Adam and Saviour of the world (as the first was the destroyer of it), should be born of his seed. And from that time forward, his family and posterity, the Jews or Israelites, were the Church of God all along until Christ was accordingly born and appeared among them. So that wheresoever they were, there was the Church. Which is

therefore said to be “in the wilderness,” when they were
 Acts 7. 38. there.

But now, I believe, ‘the Church’ is not confined to that or any one nation or people, but is Catholic, that is to say, general or universal, spread over the face of the whole earth: there being no nation or people but what either are
 Matt. 28. 19. or may be of it. For our Saviour commanded His Apostles to make all nations His disciples, and bring them into His Church by Baptism. And accordingly we find that the Gentiles were soon after brought into it as well as the Jews. Since which time there always hath been, and still is, a Catholic Church; that is to say, a congregation of all Christian
 1 Cor. 1. 2. people dispersed throughout the world, even of “all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” For all that do so are neither Jews
 ch. 10. 32. nor Gentiles, but “the Church of God,” that Church without which there is no Salvation: forasmuch as “there is no name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved,” but the Name of Jesus Christ. But His Name is
 Acts 4. 12. made known and professed only in His Church. And
 ch. 2. 47. therefore “the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.” And that is also the reason why there
 Matt. 16. 18. always was, and always will be, a Church upon earth, and likewise why it is now so necessary for all to believe the Church to be Catholic; that every one may look upon it to be as free for him as for any other to be added to it, that he may be saved.

I believe, further, that this Catholic Church is holy. Not but that there are many unholy persons in it; many who profess the Name of Christ, but will not observe His laws: as He Himself foreshewed, by comparing His Church to a field wherein there are tares as well as wheat, and to a net that gathereth of every kind, “good and bad,” yet nevertheless the whole Church, as such, is holy, in respect of the holy doctrine which it teacheth, the holy discipline which it exerciseth, the holy laws which it publisheth, the holy worship which it performeth, the holy Sacraments which it administereth, and especially in respect of its most holy
 ch. 3. 24,
 25.
 ver. 47.
 Eph. 5. 23, Head, Jesus Christ.

27; Col. 1.
 18. For He having “purchased His Church with His Own

blood," He looks upon it as His Own body, which He, as Acts 20. 28. the Head, actuates and influences by His Holy Spirit, moving and working in His Word and Sacraments as there administered, by officers constituted and appointed by Himself for that purpose. By which means all that are admitted into His Church may be sanctified or made holy. If any be not, it is their own fault. But none can ever become truly holy, but only in the Catholic Church. Which therefore may well be called holy, as the particular Church or people of the Jews often is in the Old Testament. Eph. 4. 11, 12; 1 Cor. 12. 28. Deut. 7. 6; 28. 9.

But though there may be none elsewhere, I believe that in Christ's Holy Catholic Church there is a 'Communion of Saints;' that is to say, a company or society of holy persons, who are "called to be Saints," and are accordingly "sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus," so as to be "holy, as He who hath called them is holy in all manner of conversation." These are truly the servants of the Most High God, His children, His elect, "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that they should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light." They, as "lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," which they strive to do with all their might: making it their constant care and study to serve and please God, by doing all such good works as He hath set them. And God is graciously pleased to accept of what they do, through the merits of Jesus Christ, their Mediator and Advocate with Him. In Whom they have likewise the Almighty Governor of the world always reconciled unto them, and well pleased with them: they have His Holy Spirit to direct and assist them in all their actions: they have His Holy Angels "to keep them in all their ways." They have "all things working together for their good." And therefore, whatsoever their outward condition may seem to be, they are always happy, and the only happy people in the world. 1 Cor. 1. 2. Acts 26. 18. 1 Pet. 1. 15. ch. 2. 9. ver. 5. Ps. 91. 11. Rom. 8. 28.

This is that which we call the 'Invisible Church,' a distinct society from the rest of mankind, having a peculiar

fellowship or communion both with the Father and with His
 1 John 1. 3. Son Jesus Christ, and likewise with one another, or among
 Eph. 2. 19. themselves, as being fellow-citizens together, and “of the
 Household of God.” Fellow-members in the same body,
 1 Cor. 12. 13. the body of Christ: for “by one Spirit they are all baptized
 into one body.” Therefore, as we have many members in
 one body, and all members have not the same office; so the
 Rom. 12. 4. Saints “being many, are one body in Christ, and every one
 5. members one of another.” By which means all the true
 Saints of God, in what part of the world soever they live,
 they have the same fellowship as the members of the same
 body have with one another; being all actuated, influenced,
 and governed by one and the same Spirit: for through Him
 Eph. 2. 18. in Whom they are, they have all “access by one Spirit unto
 the Father.” And how far soever they live asunder, among
 ch. 4. 4-6. them all there is “one body, one Spirit, even as they are all
 called in one hope of their calling; one Lord, one Faith,
 one Baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all,
 and through all, and in them all.”

From whence ariseth that strict union and ‘Communion
 of Saints,’ that they all think the same thing; they are all
 of one mind in all things necessary to Salvation: they ‘love
 as brethren;’ and strive about nothing but which should
 serve God best, and do most good in the world; every one
 Phil. 3. 14. “pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high call-
 Eph. 4. 13. ing of God in Jesus Christ,” till they “all come, in the
 unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of
 God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of
 Col. 1. 12. the fulness of Christ,” and so are “meet to be partakers of
 the Inheritance of the Saints in light.” God grant that I
 may be of this Holy Communion; that I may be numbered
 with the Saints in glory everlasting.

Eccles. 7. But “there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good,
 20. and sinneth not,” that is, transgresseth not the Law of God;
 1 John 3. 4. for “sin is the transgression of the Law.” And every trans-
 gression of the Law in thought, word, or deed, is sin. But
 every sin deserveth death, and is threatened with it by God
 Rom. 6. 23; Himself. And therefore all having sinned, there are none
 Gen. 2. 17; but who want to have their sins forgiven before they can be
 Gal. 3. 10.

saved. But I believe that, in the Holy Catholic Church, 'forgiveness of sins' may be had; and that all that are of the Communion of Saints have it by Christ.

For "in Him they have Redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." That is, whereas they, as well as all other people, have sinned, or transgressed the Law of God, and are therefore bound over to suffer the punishments which He hath threatened against those who do so: they, upon their repentance and faith in Christ, are discharged from their obligation to suffer the said punishments, being redeemed or bought off by the blood of Christ, which was "shed for many, for the remission of sins." It was shed for all, but so that none have remission of sins by it except they believe. But how many soever believe in Him, as all the Saints do, their sins are actually remitted, and all their obligations to punishment for them cancelled and made void by it. For as He once shed His blood, so by virtue of that He is always making intercession for them; and doth it so effectually, that His death being accepted of instead of theirs, they are no longer obnoxious to the punishments that were due unto their sins; but are as perfectly absolved and acquitted from them as if they had never sinned. Eph. 1. 7;
Col. 1. 14. Matt. 26. 28.

Neither is that all; for their sins being so forgiven, they are also justified; that is (as our Church explains it in the Article of Justification), 'they are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, not for their own works or deservings.' Whatsoever good works they do, as be sure they do all they can, they cannot deserve or merit any thing at all from God by them, much less so much as that they should be accounted righteous before Him, notwithstanding that they are not perfectly so in themselves. But Christ having been made "sin [or a sin-offering] for them, [to that end and purpose] that they might be made the righteousness of God in Him," therefore what is wanting in themselves, they have it abundantly in Him. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

For being by faith engrafted into Him, the True Vine, and so made members of His body, they partake of His merits and righteousness. "They are found in Him not Phil. 3. 9.

having their own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And having such perfect righteousness as that is in Christ, they are thereby justified, as they well may, or accounted righteous before God. By which means the great loss which mankind sustained in their first parent, is now fully repaired in so wonderful a manner, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One many are made righteous;" as righteous in Him the second Adam, as they were made sinners by the first: and being "thus justified by faith, they have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "This honour have all His Saints."

Rom. 5. 19.

ch. 5. 1.

[Ps. 49. 9.]

QUESTIONS.

- What do you understand by the word ' Church ?'
- How long hath there been a Church ?
- Where was it before Christ was born ?
- What mean you by the word ' catholic ?'
- What by the Catholic Church ?
- Why is it necessary to believe the Church to be catholic ?
- In what respects is it said to be holy ?
- Can we be sanctified or saved any where but in the Church ?
- What is meant by the Communion of Saints ?
- Who are Saints ?
- What communion have they together ?
- What is sin ?
- What do you mean by the forgiveness of sins ?
- Whose sins are forgiven ?
- By what means are their sins forgiven ?
- What do you understand by their being justified ?
- How are they justified ?
- What benefit have they thereby ?

The Resurrection of the Body, and the Life Everlasting.

By the ' resurrection of the body,' I here understand and believe, that every body that ever was informed or endued with a reasonable soul, and is afterwards parted from it by death, although it be then reduced to earth again, or

eaten up of worms, or beasts, or fishes, or any other way consumed, and the parts of it scattered abroad and dispersed all over the earth, yet, at the last day, all the parts and particles of it shall come together again, every one into its proper place where it was before, so as to make up again the same individual body; to which the same soul that before departed from it, being again united, the same person that before died, shall revive, or rise to life again. So that every human person that ever did, or ever shall die, from the beginning to the end of the world, shall then rise again and live as really as ever he did before.

That this is possible I cannot doubt, who believe that God is Almighty, and can do what He will; and that He will thus raise up our bodies to life again, I believe, because He Himself hath said He will. We have His Own Word for it, not only in the New, but likewise in the Old Testament. For there also He hath declared this to be His will so plainly, that they who believed Moses and the Prophets believed also the resurrection of the dead; as appears in that this was generally believed by all the Jews in our Saviour's time, except some few among them called Sadducees, who denied it.

Matt. 22.
23; Acts 23.
8.

But what little reason they had to deny it appears from the weak question they propounded to our Lord about it, Who also convinced them of their error by an argument drawn from Moses himself, so as that they had not one word to say for it. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead," said He, "have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" for "all live unto Him." Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were then dead, and yet God said to Moses, that He was their God; which could not be if they should always continue in a state of death. For "He is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The dead are not in being as men; and then He could not possibly be their God. He could not be the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, when there were no such persons in the world, nor ever would be, unless they rise again: and therefore His calling Himself their God,

Matt. 22.
24, 28.

ver. 31, 32;
Mark 12.
26, 27.

Luke 20. 38.

Exod. 3. 6,
15.

was an undeniable argument that He would raise them up again from death to life. And if He would raise them, then, by necessary consequence, all other too.

Especially considering, that “all live to God.” They also who are dead to us, live to Him ; to Whom all things are present, and therefore the resurrection, which being certainly determined by God, He looks upon the dead as if they were already raised and now living : as He plainly shewed in calling Himself their God. But if the dead should never rise again, they could not live to Him : for they would never live again at all, and so would be utterly incapable of having God to be their God :

Wherefore God, by saying that He was their God, plainly declared that He would raise them up to life again ; which, therefore, is so clear and evident a proof of the resurrection, that I do not wonder that the Sadducees “were put to silence” at their first hearing it.

Matt.22.34.

There are many other places in the Old Testament, where this great truth is revealed to us : but in the New it is so fully explained and proved, that no Christian can doubt of it. Insomuch that I believe, that as really as I am now alive, and as certainly as I shall never die, I shall be raised again to life at the Last Day : and not only I, but all mankind that ever did or shall die, both just and unjust. For, as our Lord Himself hath taught us, “the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

1 Cor. 15.
20, &c. ;
Rev. 20. 12,
&c.

Acts 24. 15.

John 5. 28,
29.

And as I thus believe ‘the resurrection of the dead,’ I believe also ‘the life everlasting,’ that shall follow upon it. For I believe, that when the dead shall be raised up to life again at the Last Day, they shall never die any more, but from that day forward they shall live for ever. For they shall be no sooner raised, but they shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, Who shall adjudge them all to their everlasting state ; the wicked to everlasting punishment, and the righteous to everlasting life.

Matt.25.46.

ver. 41.

To the wicked He will then say, as He Himself hath told us beforehand, “Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting

fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." So that He will then "take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." They shall be "cast forth into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," where they shall live with the fiends of Hell, and suffer the same unexpressible pains and torments which were at first prepared for them, not only for some ages, but to all eternity.

But the saints, or "righteous, shall then shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father;" for the Judge shall say to them, at that day, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Every one of them being a son, and therefore an heir of God, shall inherit a kingdom: a kingdom not newly erected, but prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of all things that were then made: for they shall every one "inherit all things." A kingdom where there is "no night, nor any need of the sun or moon to shine in it; for the glory of the Lord shall lighten it;" under the light of Whose countenance shining continually upon them, they, being made equal to the Holy Angels, shall live with them in perfect love, and peace, and joy, and glory, and happiness, for ever. This is that which in the Holy Scriptures is called "everlasting life," and which I therefore believe shall be conferred upon all that believe in the "only-begotten Son of God."

To Whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

QUESTIONS.

What do you mean by the resurrection of the body?

Did the Jews believe it?

What ground had they for it?

Why do you believe it?

What do you understand by everlasting life?

What kind of life shall wicked people live for ever?

What is that everlasting life which the righteous shall have ?

Q. What dost thou chiefly learn in these articles of thy belief?

A. First, I learn to believe in God the Father, Who hath made me and all the world.

Secondly, In God the Son, Who hath redeemed me and all mankind.

Thirdly, In God the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.

Our Blessed Saviour, a little before His ascension, commanded and empowered His Apostles to "go and teach," or
 Matt. 28. 19. (as the original word signifies) make all nations His disciples, by baptizing them "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," which was perfectly a new institution. For though baptizing, that is, dipping, or washing, or sprinkling with water, was commonly used in admitting proselytes, and upon other occasions among the Jews before; yet never in this form, in the Name of the Three Divine Persons, as our Saviour here commandeth it to be done; and thereby hath given us reason to believe, that the Jews understood what was meant by these terms, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." For otherwise our Saviour would have spoken unintelligibly to them; which we cannot imagine He would, in the institution of a Sacrament. But they being conversant in the writings of Moses and the Prophets, had often read, as of the Father, so of the Son, or Word of God; and likewise of the Holy Ghost, or Spirit of God. And they knew well enough that these are not creatures, but that each of them is God: as appears particularly concerning the Son, from their saying that Jesus Christ, by calling Himself "the Son of God," or
 John 5. 18. ch. 10. 33. saying that God was His Father, made Himself equal with God, and, which is the same, made Himself God. For this plainly shews, that although they would not own Jesus to be the person, yet they believed that God hath a Son, and that this Son is equal with God, or that He is God Himself, of the same essence with the Father.

But this fundamental article of our belief, the Trinity in Unity, even that these three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are one God, is now so plainly revealed in the Holy Scripture, given by His inspiration, that none can doubt of it who believe what is there written; and so necessary to be believed, that we can believe none of the articles that belong to our Salvation, unless we first believe this. We cannot believe in God the Father, unless we believe He hath a Son begotten of Himself: for otherwise He would not be truly a Father. We cannot believe in one God, unless we believe the Father and the Son to be one. We cannot believe in the Son, for our redemption, unless we believe Him to be God, forasmuch as it cost more to redeem us, than any could give but God Himself. We cannot believe in the Holy Ghost, to sanctify us, unless we believe Him to be God. For none, be sure, can sanctify us, or make us holy and new creatures, but He Who at first created us: which none did or could do but God.

And yet we cannot believe that these Three are so many several Gods; for then there would be more Gods than one: which is contrary to reason, as well as Scripture, where every one of these Divine Persons being called Jehovah, the most proper and incommunicable Name of God, lest people should be thereby tempted to think that there are more Gods than one, they had this remarkable caution given them, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," (as *Deut. 6. 4.* our translation hath it,) or "one Jehovah," which there would have been no occasion for, if no more than one Person be Jehovah; or it had not been necessary to believe that the Three who are so called are all One Jehovah, or Being in general (as the word signifies), which can be but one.

But according to the idiom and usage of the Hebrew tongue, wherein the great and incommunicable Name of God, which we read Jehovah, and translate 'the Lord,' seldom, if ever, hath an adjective joined with it; those remarkable words, which are ushered in with "Hear, O Israel," and concluded, in the original, with a letter greater than ordinary, as the first word also is, to shew some extraordinary mystery to be contained in them, may, and ought to be thus translated, 'The Lord, our God, the Lord, is one.' Whereby the

Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, is still more clearly revealed to us, as clearly as it well can be in that language. For here is first God the Father called Jehovah, 'the Lord ;' then God the Son, called, as He usually is in Holy Scripture, 'our God ;' and God the Holy Ghost, called also Jehovah, 'the Lord ;' and these Three are expressly said to be 'one.'

It is true, this is a great mystery, far above our comprehension ; but so are all the perfections of the Godhead, as well as this. And therefore we are not required to comprehend it, but only to believe it ; and to believe it upon His word, Who hath revealed it to us, and so hath made it necessary for us to believe it : which therefore we must be sure to do, so as to continue firm and stedfast in this faith, as ever we desire to believe aright in Almighty God, or hope to be saved by Him.

Especially considering that God our Saviour, in that He commanded that every one of these Divine Persons should be distinctly named in the very act of making His disciples, hath thereby given us to understand that He will own none for His disciples, or true members of His Church, but only such as believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as Three Divine Persons, but one God : which He here also gives us firm ground to believe, in that He ordained this Sacrament to be administered (not in the names, but) in the Name of these Three Persons ; and so hath signified His pleasure that the same honour and worship should be given to all and every one of them alike : and by necessary consequence, that we should believe all and each one of them to be of one Essence or Substance ; or, as He expresseth it by His Apostle, that 'the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, these three are one.' Three in the masculine gender, and therefore three persons : one in the neuter, and therefore one thing, as the word signifies. Which I therefore believe upon His word : and so all must do, that desire to be His true and faithful Disciples ; so as to have "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost," always with them.

1 John 5. 7.

2 Cor. 13. 14.

Hence it is that the Church hath all along required, that they who desire to be admitted by Baptism into it, should

first profess to believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; which is the sum of the whole Creed, and that which we chiefly learn in it, as our Church hath here taught us ; even that we believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost ; putting the word ‘ God ’ before every person, the better to express and declare our belief, that every one of these three Persons is the one living and true God.

But that we may understand something also how these three Divine Persons, subsisting in the one Divine essence, are pleased to manifest and distinguish themselves in their operations towards us, and the rest of the creation, every one that is catechised is here taught to say, as I now do from my heart, that ‘ I first believe in God the Father, Who hath made me and all the world ; ’ that is, all things that were ever made, visible and invisible ; which in the beginning of the Creed, as all along in the Holy Scriptures, are all comprehended under these two words, ‘ Heaven and earth.’

Secondly, ‘ I believe in God the Son, Who hath redeemed me and all mankind.’ I believe that He ‘ redeemed me ’ particularly ; or, as St. Paul expresseth it, that “ He loved me and gave Himself for me.” And not only me, but ‘ all mankind : ’ for “ He gave Himself a ransom for all.” He was a propitiation “ for the sins of the whole world ; ” and “ tasted death for every man.” For, every man being of that nature in which He died, and so paid the price of man’s redemption, every man was redeemed by it, even they also who do not accept of His redemption, nor believe in Him for it, and so receive no advantage by it. As our queen,* suppose, having many of her subjects made slaves in Barbary, if she agrees with the king of the country for the redemption of them all, and accordingly pays the price agreed upon, they are all now equally redeemed ; although some, perhaps, living in remote or obscure places of the country, never hear of it, or will not believe it ; and others, having been long accustomed to it, prefer their slavery before liberty, and choose to continue there rather than return

Gal. 2. 20.

1 Tim. 2. 6.

1 John 2. 2.

Heb. 2. 9.

Rom. 14. 15 ;
1 Cor. 8. 11.

* Queen Anne.

into their own country, and so lose the benefit of their redemption.

Thirdly, 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God.' Who 'sanctifieth,' not Who 'hath sanctified,' as the Father 'hath made,' and the Son 'hath redeemed me,' heretofore, but 'doth sanctify me' at present, and continually; this being a work that is always in doing while we are in this world. And as the Son did not redeem all the world which the Father made, but only 'all mankind,' so the Holy Ghost doth not sanctify all mankind which the Son redeemed, but only 'all the elect people of God;' such as they only are, who truly believe in His Son Jesus Christ, and so have Him to intercede for them, that they may have His 'Holy Spirit' to abide with

John 14. 16; Him, and to sanctify them, which therefore is accordingly
17. 17. shed on them abundantly, and renews or sanctifies them

Tit. 3. 5, 6. through the same Jesus Christ our Saviour. He 'sanctifieth them,' that is, He makes them holy and new creatures, He mortifieth all their sins, purifieth all their hearts, and is a

Acts 26. 18. principle of new life in them: "He openeth their eyes, and turneth them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Jesus Christ."

QUESTIONS.

What way did Christ ordain for the admitting persons into His Church, or making them His Disciples?

Had the Jews any ground to believe the blessed Trinity in Unity?

Can any one be a true disciple of Christ without believing in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

What ground have we to believe they are all one God?

What do you chiefly learn in the Creed?

What do you believe that God the Father did?

What did God the Son?

How do you prove that He redeemed all mankind?

What doth God the Holy Ghost?

Why do you say, 'He sanctifieth;' and not, 'He sanctified?'

Whom doth He sanctify?

Who are the elect people of God?

What do you understand by His sanctifying them?

PART III. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

Q. You said that your godfathers and godmothers did promise for you, that you should keep God's Commandments. Tell me how many there be?

A. Ten.

Q. Which be they?

A. The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

I. Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.

OF the three things which godfathers and godmothers promise in the name of the child, or the child by them, the last is, that 'he will keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of his life.' Wherefore the catechist having examined and instructed him in the true faith, 'without which it is impossible to please God,' or keep His Commandments, he now puts him in mind of Heb. 11. 6. the 'Commandments' which he promised to keep.

And the first question he asketh the child about them is, 'How many there be?' To which he answereth, 'Ten:' that being the number of them, according to the Scriptures. Deut. 4. 13; 10. 4. For though there be many more particular precepts, they are all reducible to those Ten general Commandments which God was pleased solemnly to proclaim with thunder and lightning, and with the voice of a trumpet, upon Mount Sinai, &c., and which He afterwards wrote upon two tables Exod. 19. 16; 20. 1. of stone, with His Own finger, to signify their perpetual ch. 31. 18; force and obligation to the end of the world, when every 32. 16; man shall be judged according as he hath or hath not ob- Deut. 9. 10; served them. 10. 4. For which reason also they are directed every one to every man singly, or by himself; 'Thou shalt,' or, 'Thou shalt not,' &c. that every man may look upon

them as spoken particularly to him, and accordingly take care to do what is there commanded, and to avoid what is there forbidden, either expressly or implicitly.

For where any thing is forbidden, the contrary duty is implicitly commanded: and so where any thing is commanded, every thing contrary or different from that is forbidden: which that we may the better understand, God Himself hath been graciously pleased to signify His pleasure herein, more particularly in other places of His Holy Word. Out of which I shall therefore, by His assistance, shew you how you ought to keep all and every one of these His Commandments, according to the promise which ye made when ye were baptized.

The next question, therefore, concerning the Commandments, is, ‘Which be they?’ To which it is answered, ‘The same which God spake in the twentieth chapter of Exodus;’ that is, which He is there recorded to have spoken, “saying, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” For this is not any of the Commandments, but a general preface to them all, which He was pleased to put before them, to shew the indispensable obligation that lies upon all men to observe all these laws; seeing He that commanded them, is ‘the Lord,’ the Supreme Governor and Lawgiver of the world, Whom all the creatures in it are bound to obey, at their utmost peril. ‘I,’ saith He, ‘am the Lord: I, Who make and publish these laws, am Jehovah, the “Lord of Hosts,” the Lord of the whole creation, Who give essence and existence to, and have absolute dominion over all things in it.’

And then, to enforce them more particularly upon His people, for whom He had a special kindness, He adds, “I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” His people, at that time, were the children of Israel, whom He had lately delivered from the Egyptian bondage; and therefore He speaks more immediately unto them: but, in them, to all the true Israel of God; to all that follow the faith of their father Abraham, in all ages; to all His elect and peculiar people, which He hath redeemed from the slavery of sin and Satan, of which the deliverance out of Egypt was a type and figure.

So that this is the same, in effect, as if He had said, 'I, Who give thee these laws, am the Lord thy God, Who have redeemed thee from all iniquity, to be My Own, and therefore expect and require that thou, above all people, take special care to observe all these My COMMANDMENTS:' whereof

The FIRST is, *Thou shalt have none other gods but Me, or before Me.*

Although there be really no other but one God, the Creator and Governor of all things: yet there be many "which are called gods," and esteemed so by men: who ^{1 Cor. 8. 5.} having, by the fall of our first parents, lost the right sense and knowledge of the true God, and retaining only some general notions of such a Being in the world, they have been apt, in all ages, to imagine one creature or other to be God. Some have thought the sun, moon, and stars; others, ancient and famous men, to be gods; some one thing, some another. Insomuch, that there is scarce any creature in Heaven or earth, but what hath been reputed as a god by some or other. Hence it is that we read of so many, and such various gods, in all ages. The Jews themselves, to ^{Jer. 2. 28; 11. 13.} whom this law was given, had at one time as many gods as cities. So it was for many ages with all the rest of mankind; and so it is with many at this day. And all people, naturally conceiving God to be of supreme excellency, justice, goodness, and power over them, whatsoever it is that they imagine to be God, they honour, and fear, and love, and trust on it, as if it was really so. And therefore, although it be not so in itself, it is as a god to them.

This, therefore, is that which the Almighty Creator of the world, the one living and true God, doth here expressly forbid; "Thou shalt have no other gods but Me:" or, according to the letter of the Law, 'There shall be no other gods to thee before Me:' that is, 'Thou shalt not think, believe, or own, any thing to be God but Me. Thou shalt not ascribe supreme authority, power, or goodness, or any other Divine perfection, to any but Me. Thou shalt not fear any thing visible or invisible but only Me. Thou shalt not regard them that have familiar spirits, nor seek after witches or wizards, nor use divinations, or enchantments, or any suchlike abominations. Thou shalt not put any trust ^{Lev. 19. 31; Deut. 18. 10, 11.}

or confidence in any creature that is in Heaven or earth. Thou shalt not love, nor respect, nor value, nor desire, any thing in comparison of Me. If thou doest any of these things, thou hast other gods before Me, or in My sight, Who am the Searcher of hearts, and see and know it.'

By this, therefore, you may see what it is which Almighty God here commands every one to do, according as He hath elsewhere also signified His Divine Will. He commands thee to believe in Him the Lord thy God, the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost, One God, the only Wise, Almighty, Immortal God, and in Jesus Christ, thy God, "thy Gracious and most Merciful God, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth." He commands thee to "acknowledge Him in all thy ways," and to own thyself "obliged to Him, and to thank Him for all thou hast." He commands thee "to sanctify Him, the Lord of Hosts, and to make Him thy only fear and thy only dread," so as to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long." He commands thee "to trust on Him with all thy heart;" "to desire Him above all things;" and "to rejoice in Him always:" and that "thou love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; for this is the first and great commandment."

John 14. 1;
Exod. 34. 6.

Prov. 3. 6.

1 Thess. 5.
18; Eph. 5.
20.

Isa. 8. 13.

Prov. 23. 17.

ch. 3. 5.

Ps. 73. 25.

Phil. 4. 4.

Matt. 22.
37, 38.

QUESTIONS.

What is the third thing which you promised in your Baptism?

How many Commandments are there?

How did God proclaim them?

Why did He write them upon tables of stone?

Why do they all run in the singular number?

Where do you find them written?

Why did God say, "I am the Lord thy God," &c. before He began them?

Did He not give them to other people, as well as to the Jews?

Which is the First Commandment?

Are there any other gods but One?

Why then doth God command us to have no other?

What doth God forbid in this Commandment?

What doth He here command every one to do?

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, and visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love Me, and keep My Commandments.

As the Lord “made all things for Himself,” so He still Prov. 16. 4. upholdeth and governeth all things for Himself, to shew forth His glory, that all such creatures, as He for that purpose hath made capable of it, may see His wonderful works, and accordingly praise and glorify Him for them. Which being His great end in what He hath done and still doeth, He will not suffer this His glory to be given to another: “I am the Lord,” saith He, “that is My Name: and My Isa. 42. 8. glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images.” Hence it is, that as the first thing He commands is, ‘That we shall have no other gods but Him,’ no, not in our thoughts; that we shall not think or believe there is any other God that made and governeth the world, but only He the Lord our God: so, in the next place, He forbids all such outward acts, whereby we may seem to own any other God, and so to give His glory to another: which being plainly the great end and design of this law in general, we shall easily see into the true meaning of each particular branch of it.

First, saith he, ‘Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth:’ that is, thou shalt not make any such thing to thyself, for thee to perform any such acts to it whereby thou mayest seem to think it to be God, whether thou really think so or no.

He doth not here simply forbid the making of the picture, image, or likeness of any creature: for He himself appointed some such to be made in the old Law, particularly the

cherubim in the most holy place. Neither doth He expressly forbid the making any image or likeness of Himself; for that He knows is altogether impossible.

But He forbids the making the likeness of any creature in Heaven or earth, or under the earth, to represent Him our Creator to us, so as to look upon it as God, or His image, and to carry ourselves accordingly towards it, as if it was indeed the True God. Such was the calf which Aaron made soon after this law was given, which God Himself intimates to be a breach of it. The people looked upon it as 'their Gods,' or the divine persons that brought them out of Egypt, and as 'Jehovah, the Lord,' and so as the Lord their God. This was their sin (as it was Jeroboam's afterwards). As appears also from Moses's putting them in mind, that they saw no similitude, when the Lord spoke to them in Horeb, as an argument why they should not make any graven image.

Exod. 32. 8.

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

1 Kings 12.
28.

Deut. 4. 15,
16.

Isa. 40. 18;
Acts 17. 29.

Which clearly shews the meaning of this law to be, that we must not make the image or likeness of any thing whereby to represent Almighty God to us; Who is so infinitely above all things, that it is impossible any thing should be like Him, and therefore it is a great disparagement and diminishing of His glory, to offer at representing Him by any picture or image. Wherefore He here expressly forbids both the making any such image, and the worshipping it when it is made. For it follows:

'Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them:' or (as it is in the original text), 'Thou shalt not worship them, nor serve them.' For here are two things forbidden to be done to an image or likeness of any thing, that it may not become an idol, or reputed as a God, 'worship' and 'service.'

First, 'Thou shalt not worship them;' or, 'Thou shalt not bow down to them,' as the word here used signifies. Neither is there any word in all the Holy Scriptures that is commonly translated 'worshipping,' but what properly signifies, 'to bow,' or 'fall down,' or use some such outward gesture. Which being a sign of great subjection, he that doeth it to an image, doth thereby signify his subjection to it; and whatsoever he may think or intend in himself, as to

all outward appearance, he seems to acknowledge and believe it to be God. And therefore the three children chose rather to be cast into a furnace of fire, than to fall down to the image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up; lest they should break this commandment, and sin against God, by owning that image to be God. Dan. 3.
6-18.

And then it follows in the text, ‘nor serve them:’ that is, as thou shalt not actually bow down unto, and so worship, the image or likeness of any thing; so neither shalt thou do any thing for it, or about it: thou shalt not assist in the making or maintaining it; thou shalt not build any temple or altar for it; thou shalt not offer sacrifice, nor burn incense, nor pray to it, nor contribute any thing towards its having any signs of religious honour or worship performed to it. He that doeth any such thing to or for an image, or any creature whatsoever, he thereby serves it as God, and so makes it an idol, and is guilty of ‘idolatry;’ that is, of ‘serving an idol,’ as the word properly signifies.

‘For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children,’ &c. Here it hath pleased God to back and enforce this law with several reasons and arguments, to make us the more careful of observing it.

First, because He is a ‘jealous God;’ that is, speaking after the manner of men, He is ‘jealous’ that they who perform any external acts of religious worship and service to any image or creature, whatsoever they may pretend to the contrary, they do really worship and serve it as God, and so give it that honour and glory which is due only to Him.

Secondly, because He will punish those who break this law most severely, not only in their own persons, but in their posterity also, ‘to the third and fourth generation.’

And, lastly, because of the infinite goodness and mercy that He will shew to ‘thousands,’ even to all that love and honour him, so as to keep this and His other Commandments, throughout all generations, even for ever and ever.

Now, by this we may learn what the Lord our God doth here positively require of every man: for in that He forbids

you to do it to an image or idol, He as plainly requires and commands every one of you to ‘bow your head’ or ‘knees before Him;’ and so to ‘worship Him,’ whensoever you come into His special presence or speak to Him, or hear Him speaking to you.

As when Abraham’s servant blessed the Lord for His
 Gen. 24. 26. success, “he bowed down his head and worshipped the
 Exod. 34. 8. Lord.” When Moses heard God speaking, “he bowed his
 Neh. 8. 6. head towards the earth and worshipped.” When Ezra
 blessed the Lord, the Great God, in the midst of the con-
 gregation, “all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with
 lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and wor-
 shipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.” Thus
 the Saints of old constantly worshipped God, and so did our
 Exod. 4. 31; Blessed Lord Himself in the garden, and upon the cross;
 1 Chron. 29. and so did His Apostles and Disciples after Him.
 20; 2 Chron. 20. 18; 29.
 30, &c.
 Matt. 26. 39; But then you must take care to worship Him at the same
 Luke 22. 41. time, as they did, in the spirit too, by using such bodily
 John 19. 30. gestures and adorations before Him, out of a deep sense
 Acts 7. 60; and holy fear of His Divine Majesty, and supreme authority
 9. 40; 20. 36;
 21. 5, &c.
 John 4. 24. over you.

He commands you also to ‘serve Him;’ that is, to do
 what you can to promote His honour and glory in the world.
 For in that His Own glory is the great end that He aims at,
 and carrieth on in all things He doeth, so far as you do any
 Prov. 16. 4. thing that conduceth to that end, so far you serve Him;
 which you are all therefore bound to do, according to your
 several abilities, by defending and enlarging His Church,
 where only He is known and worshipped upon earth; by
 making all your prayers and solemn addresses to Him, as
 the Giver of all good gifts; by praising and magnifying His
 Name together; by building and adorning places where to
 do it; by observing the times that He hath set apart for His
 Own worship and service; by celebrating the Sacraments
 that He hath ordained; by keeping His laws yourselves, and
 persuading others to do it; by relieving His poor servants;
 and by walking in holiness and righteousness before Him
 all the days of your life, and doing all things to His glory;
 1 Cor. 10. 31. that “your light may so shine before men, that they may
 Matt. 5. 16.

see your good works and glorify your Father Which is in Heaven." Thus "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, Matt. 4. 10. and Him only shalt thou serve."

QUESTIONS.

What is the general design of this commandment?

Are we here forbidden to make any image or picture?

In what sense doth God forbid us to make the likeness of any thing?

Can He be represented by an image?

Why are you forbidden to worship or bow down to an image?

How are you forbidden to serve an image?

What is that sin called?

What reasons are here given for the keeping this law?

What is here positively commanded?

How must we worship God?

What service must we do for Him?

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.

This commandment is designed for the same end with the two former, even to keep up the honour of Almighty God, and His glory shining in the world. For which purpose, having first commanded you to have or own no other gods but Him, and then not so much as to seem to do so by performing any external acts of religious honour and worship to any but Himself: He here commandeth you 'not to take His Name in vain,' but to give Him that honour which is due to Him, whensoever you may make any mention of Him.

He doth not here forbid you to take His Name into your mouths at all, but not to do it 'in vain.' But rather, on the contrary, by forbidding you to do it 'in vain,' He requires you to do it upon solemn occasions, when it may tend to His honour; as it always doth, when you are lawfully required to swear by it, and accordingly to do so in a lawful and

religious manner. For hereby you publicly own Him to be the Searcher of hearts, omniscient in knowing whether you really think as you say; and to be just in punishing you if you do not. Hence He forbade His people to make men-

Josh. 23. 7. tion of the names of false gods, or "cause to swear by them,"
Deut. 6. 13; but commanded them to swear by His Name: "Thou shalt
10. 20. fear the Lord thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by His Name," and gave them directions how to do it aright,
Jer. 4. 2. saying, "Thou shalt swear the Lord liveth in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness."

And accordingly we find His people, in all ages, were wont to swear by His Name, or call upon Him to witness what they said, where there was need of it, not only in the

2Cor. 1. 23; Old Testament, but likewise in the New. And therefore
Gal. 1. 20;
Phil. 1. 8. you not only may, but ought to swear by His Name, when you are required to do it by the governors which He hath
Heb. 6. 16. set over you in Church or State. "An oath for confirmation putting an end to all strife."

But that which He here forbids, is, the taking His Name 'in vain;' that is, when you have no just or necessary occa-

Lev. 19. 12. sion for it, as He Himself explains it, where He saith: "Ye shall not swear by My Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God. I am the Lord." You must not 'swear falsely' by His Name; that is, you must never use His Name, nor call upon Him to attest any thing but what is really just and true, or what you know or verily believe to be so: and if you promise any thing upon oath, or in His
Num. 30. 2. Name, you must be sure to perform it. Otherwise you swear
Ps. 24. 4. falsely and deceitfully, and so 'take His Name in vain,' to the highest degree that can be.

And as you must not swear falsely by it, so neither must you 'profane the Name of the Lord;' that is, you must not use it upon every impertinent occasion in your common discourse, as if it was not a sacred, but a profane or common name; for that also is taking it in vain, and to no purpose. This is that which our Saviour means, where He

Matt. 5. 34. saith, "Swear not at all," that is, in your communication or familiar discoursing with one another, as He Himself explains it. To the same purpose is that of St. James: "Above
ver. 37.
Jam. 5. 12. all things, swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by earth

neither by any other oath ; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation." That is, in your ordinary conversation, never swear to what you say, but only affirm or deny, as the matter requireth, without calling upon God, or using His Name, either directly or indirectly, as a witness to it ; for this is ' profaning the Name of God,' for which you may justly be condemned.

And verily you can expect no other : for the Lord, the Almighty God, here saith, that ' He will not hold that man guiltless that taketh His Name in vain ;' that is, He will most certainly and most severely punish those who break this law, to which this threatening is in a peculiar manner annexed, above all others, in that they are so far from honouring and glorifying Him, the great Creator and Governor of all things, as they ought ; that they dishonour and disparage Him all they can, by putting no difference betwixt Him and His creatures ; betwixt His Name and theirs ; but using His great and glorious Name upon all occasions, as if He was one of the common subjects they talk of every day. Which is so great a sin, so highly offensive to His Divine Majesty, that He will never suffer it to go unpunished ; but will inflict some extraordinary judgment, not only upon the person that commits it, but upon the land, too, where it is usually committed and tolerated. Yea, it is one of those sins for which He sendeth His curse upon the whole earth.

Hos. 4. 1, 2.

Zech. 5. 2-4.

And to shew His extreme displeasure against this sin, when a man had blasphemed His Holy Name, although it was in his passion, while he was striving with another man, the Lord Himself commanded him to be "stoned by the whole congregation." And then to explain and confirm what He had enacted in this ' Third Commandment,' He made this law : " Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him : as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the Name of the Lord, shall be put to death."

Lev. 24. 14.

ver. 15, 16.

Wherefore you had need to take special care that you never swear, nor curse, nor blaspheme, nor profane the Name

of the Lord, the Most High God; but keep as far as possibly you can from it, lest you fall into condemnation. And for that purpose, you must carefully observe what He here commandeth: for in that He forbids you to profane, or take His Name in vain, He commands you to hallow or sanctify

Lev. 22. 32. it: "Neither shall ye (saith He) profane My Holy Name, but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel." That is, whensoever you speak of Almighty God, you must make a distinction between His and other names; you must use it as a holy, a most sacred name, with reverence and godly fear: "that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful Name, the Lord thy God."

This is that which we are commanded to pray that it may be done before all things else, saying, "Hallowed be Thy Name." And which we should, therefore, take care to do, before all things upon earth, as the holy Angels do it in Heaven, saying, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

Isa. 6. 3;
Rev. 4. 8.

QUESTIONS.

What is the general design of this commandment?

Are you here forbidden ever to speak of God?

Are you forbidden to swear by His Name?

How must you swear by it?

What is here forbidden?

What do you understand by profaning the Name of the Lord?

What is meant by 'not holding him guiltless,' that doeth it?

How were they to be punished that were guilty of it?

What is here commanded?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God. In it thou shalt do no manner of work, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, thy cattle,

and the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

This is the only commandment that we are particularly required to remember. The reason is, because all the others were written at first upon the table of our hearts, engraven in our very nature, so that we may have a connatural sense of them upon our minds; and therefore cannot properly be said to remember them, but rather to feel them, being sensible and conscious to ourselves of our duty and obligation to observe them. But this is a positive precept, given to man after he was made, and therefore not imprinted in his heart, but conveyed through his ears into it, by the external Revelation or Word of God, who, therefore, commands us to remember it, to keep it in our hearts, so as to call it to mind upon all occasions, or at the return of every Sabbath-day, that we must keep that holy. "Remember (saith He) that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day:" or rather, as it is in the original, 'Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy.' Remember both the day itself, and to keep it holy, when it comes.

What day He here means by the Sabbath, we may learn from the reasons which He is pleased to give us for the observation of it: which are two; one at the delivery of the law in Exodus, the other at the repetition of it in Deuteronomy. The reason that He gives in Exodus, is, because in six days the Lord made all things, and rested the seventh day; "wherefore," saith He, "the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day," (as it is in the original; not the 'seventh,' as it is in some translations,) "and hallowed it." From whence it appears, that the reason why He blessed this day was because, He having made all things in six days, He then rested, or ceased to make any thing anew upon the seventh day; and therefore He blessed and sanctified that day, as He here saith He had done, before the giving of the Law upon Mount Sinai. And so we find He did at the beginning of the world, where it is said, that "He blessed Gen. 2. 3. the seventh day, and sanctified it;" which was no express

Exod. 16.
22-26.

2 Kings 4.
23.

command that men should keep it holy : but, howsoever, it was so clear a declaration of His will they should, that I do not doubt but His faithful people kept it, in some measure, all along, (except perhaps in Egypt, where their bondage might make it impracticable, if not forgotten,) though we have no certain footsteps of it till about a month after the children of Israel were come out of Egypt, no more than we have of its being kept after they came into Canaan, by Joshua, by the Judges, by Samuel, by David himself, or by any of the kings of Judah or Israel, or by any that lived under them, till the time of Elisha the Prophet.

But although there be no mention made of it in all that time between Moses and Elisha, yet notwithstanding none ever doubted but that the Sabbath was kept in those days. There is as little reason to doubt but that the Patriarchs before Moses kept one day in seven, although there be no records left of it from whence we can be certain after what manner they kept it, and whether it was the seventh day which the Jews were afterwards commanded to observe, or that which we now keep, as some have thought.

Be sure when Almighty God inserted this into the body of His laws which should be always observed, He spake not a word of their keeping alway just the seventh day from the Creation, but commanded them to “remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,” and told them, that because He rested upon the seventh day, therefore “He blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it.” He did not say, that He “blessed the seventh day,” lest they should mistake His meaning, and think that He would have them always keep the same seventh day. But He altered the phrase, and said, “He blessed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it,” to shew, that He would always have them keep a Sabbath or a day of rest once in seven days, or one day in every seven. But which of the seven days was to be observed, that He reserved in His Own power to determine when He pleased : only they must keep that which He then appointed, till He should see good to alter it.

From whence we may gather, that by the Sabbath Day we are here to understand that day in every week or seven

days, which He did then, or afterwards should, appoint to be a day of rest, or holy to Himself.

But where this amongst the rest of the Commandments is afterwards repeated, the foresaid reason is quite left out, and another given of it, which cannot be supposed to be done but for some great end and purpose. For there, after the words of command, it is said, "And remember that Deut. 5. 15. thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath Day." Here the redemption of the children of Israel out of Egypt is given as the reason why God commanded them to keep the Sabbath Day, and to keep it in memory of that redemption; which makes it very probable that they came out of Egypt upon the Sabbath Day, or upon that day which from thenceforward they kept as the Sabbath, or day of rest, in memory of their beginning that day to rest from their bondage.

Howsoever, it is evident from hence that the Sabbath was to be kept for another reason besides that of the creation, even because God redeemed His people out of Egypt; which being a type of our redemption by Christ, it was plainly hereby signified, that when our redemption should be accomplished by Him, the Sabbath should be kept in memory of that; and therefore upon the day on which our Redeemer rose again, and so rested from the death which He suffered for our redemption, and thereby demonstrated it to be accomplished.

Now our Redeemer rose upon the first day of the Jewish week: though it might be, for aught we know, really the seventh day from the creation; so that God rested from His works both of creation and redemption the same day. Be sure they are both commemorated upon this day, the creation as it is one day in seven, and the redemption as it is that day of the seven whereon our Redeemer rose from the dead; Who being the Supreme Lawgiver, and particularly "the Lord of the Sabbath," He altered the day from that Mark 2. 28. which His people had hitherto kept, at least since their

coming out of Egypt, to that on which He rose again, even the first day of their week : not by any express command.

John 20. 19-26.
Acts. 2. 1.

Acts 20. 7 ;
1 Cor. 16. 2.

Rev. 1. 10.

But as God at first only blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, and so set it apart for a day of rest, without any word of command : so our Lord, the same God, blessed the first day of the week and sanctified it, by rising from the dead upon it, by appearing to His Disciples upon it, both the day He rose, and the next first day of the week after, and by sending down the Holy Ghost upon it, which though it was not a verbal, it was a real and actual sanctification of it, and a sufficient declaration of His will, that this day should ever after be kept holy ; insomuch that the Apostles, who perfectly knew His will, from that time forward accordingly had their holy exercises upon this day, and called it “ the Lord’s Day,” as being sanctified by Him, and set apart for His service, and the whole Catholic Church hath ever since kept this day holy, according to this commandment, “ Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy.”

Canon 13.

“ Keep it holy,” not according to the ceremonial or the bye-laws which were given only to the children of Israel about it, but according to what is required in this moral commandment of universal and perpetual obligation : that is, upon the six days you must do all your own works, all the worldly business that you have to do in the whole week ; you must do none of that upon the Sabbath, or the Lord’s day ; but you must keep it wholly as “ holy to the Lord,” Whose day it is, in commemorating and celebrating His creation of the world and His redemption of mankind, and in performing all such works of piety and charity as tend more immediately to the setting forth His honour and glory for the same ; that is, as our Church hath determined, ‘ in hearing the Word of God read and taught ; in private and public prayers ; in acknowledging your offences to God, and amendment of the same ; in reconciling yourselves charitably to one another, where displeasure hath been ; in oftentimes receiving the Communion of the body and blood of Christ ; in visiting the poor and sick, using all godly and sober conversation.’

QUESTIONS.

Why are you commanded to “remember the Sabbath Day?”

What day is meant by the Sabbath?

How many reasons are given for the keeping it?

Which is the first?

Doth God here command the seventh day from the creation to be always kept holy?

Which is the other reason that He giveth for it?

Why was the Sabbath altered from the seventh to the first day of the week?

Who altered it?

How doth it appear that Christ altered it?

How is this day to be now sanctified, or kept holy?

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Although Almighty God was pleased to proclaim all the Ten Commandments together upon Mount Sinai; yet He wrote them afterwards upon two tables of stone. The four first, which have an immediate respect unto Himself, He wrote upon one, which is therefore called ‘the first table.’ Upon the other, therefore called ‘the second table,’ He wrote the other six commandments: wherein He hath revealed His Divine will, how we should carry ourselves to one another while we live together upon earth, in the several places, stations, and relations, that He is pleased to set us in; so as that we may always better join together in promoting the end of our creation, by serving and glorifying Him, our Almighty Creator. Deut. 9. 10.

The first of the second table is, concerning the respect and honour which is due to parents, whether natural, spiritual, or civil. First, “Honour thy father and thy mother,” thy natural parents, of whom thou wast born and brought up: honour them; that is, have a good opinion of them, and esteem them highly, for their love and care of thee, and

Col. 3. 20; carry thyself accordingly with all lowliness, meekness, and
 Eph. 6. 1. reverence towards them, and "obey them in all things."
 1 Tim. 5. 4. Wherefore you must hearken to their instructions, and do
 whatsoever they, or either of them, bid you. You must
 study all you can to requite the care and pains they have
 taken for you. If there be occasion, you must succour and
 relieve them, and never suffer them to want any thing that
 you can help them to. As our blessed Saviour, when He
 was upon the cross, shewed His great respect unto His
 mother, by committing her to the care of His beloved
 John 19. 26, Disciple, whereby He hath taught you to take care of your
 27. parents, not only while you live, but when you die.

Col. 3. 21. On the other side, parents must "not provoke their child-
 ren, lest they be discouraged," but must bring them up
 Eph. 6. 4. "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," that they
 may understand the principles of the Christian religion, and
 the laws by which they must govern themselves through the
 Deut. 6. 7. whole course of their lives. As Abraham taught and com-
 Gen. 18. 19. manded his children to "keep the way of the Lord," and is
 commended by God Himself for it.

And as parents are thus to be spiritual guides to their
 children, so all spiritual guides are to be reckoned and re-
 2 Kings 2. spected as parents. Elisha called the Prophet Elijah
 12. "father;" so did King Joash call the Prophet Elisha.
 ch. 13. 14. And St. Paul tells the Corinthians, that he had "begotten
 1 Cor. 4. 15. them in Christ," and so was their "father," and, for the same
 reason, he calleth Onesimus his son. As St. John often
 Philem. 10. doth those that were converted to the faith by his means.

Wherefore the ministers of the Gospel, by whose means
 you are born again, and afterwards fed with the bread of
 life, are properly your ghostly, that is, your spiritual fathers,
 and you must honour them as such: you must "know them
 which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord,
 and admonish you;" and you must esteem them very highly
 in love for their work's sake. You must "obey them, and
 1 Thess. 5. submit yourselves to them, for they watch for your souls."
 12, 13. Heb. 13. 17. You must "account them worthy of double honour," and
 1 Tim. 5. 17. "communicate to them in all good things." For "so hath
 Gal. 6. 6. the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should
 1 Cor. 9. 14. live of the Gospel."

The same duties are owing also, by God's commandment, to your civil father, to the king or queen, the father or mother of the country where you live. You must not "curse the ruler of thy people," no, not so much as "in thy thought." You must not "despise dominion nor speak evil of dignities," but you must "honour the king." You must "submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." You must "obey magistrates." You must not rebel, nor resist, but be "subject to the higher powers," and that, too, "not only for wrath, but likewise for conscience' sake;" that is, you must be subject and obedient to them, not only for fear of the punishment which they may otherwise inflict upon you, but out of a sense of your duty, and in obedience to the command of God. For the same reason you must also "pray for kings, and for all that are in authority." And as you must "fear the Lord," for His sake you must "fear the king, and not meddle [nor mingle yourselves] with them that are given to change." These are the express commands of the Most High God: so that no man can rebel against his lawful prince without rebelling against Him, the Universal Monarch of the world.

But every master of a family is likewise the father of that family; and therefore his servants are all obliged by this law to honour and obey him. They must "count their own masters worthy of all honour;" they must be "obedient to them with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not to men." They must strive to "please them in all things; not answering again, not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity;" and must be "subject to them with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." "Masters [also must] give unto their servants that which is just and equal," and "forbear threatening, knowing that they also have a Master in Heaven."

Ex. 22. 28.

Eccles. 10. 20.

Jude, ver. 8.

1 Pet. 2. 17.

ver. 13, 14.

Tit. 3. 1.

Rom. 13. 1,

2. ver. 5.

1 Tim. 2. 2.

Prov. 24. 21.

1 Tim. 6. 1.

Eph. 6. 5-7;

Col. 3. 22.

Tit. 2. 9, 10.

1 Pet. 2. 18.

Col. 4. 1.

Eph. 6. 9.

This is the sum of that which the Apostle observes to be
 Eph. 6. 2. “the first commandment with promise,” from those words
 Deut. 5. 16. annexed to it, “That thy days may be long;” or, “That it
 may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God
 giveth thee.” Whereby Almighty God promiseth life,
 prosperity, and happiness, to all that sincerely keep this
 commandment. But as for such as “smite [or] curse their
 Ex. 21. 15, 17; Deut. 21. 18, 20. father or mother,” and will not obey their voice, them He
 Himself commanded to “be put to death.” And accord-
 ingly we find the breach of this law usually punished, and
 the observation of it rewarded even in this life.

QUESTIONS.

How many tables was the law written upon?
 How many commandments belong to each table?
 To which table doth this belong?
 Who are here meant by ‘parents?’
 How must you honour your natural parents?
 What must parents do for their children?
 Who are your spiritual or ghostly fathers?
 What is your duty to them?
 Who are your civil father and mother?
 How must you honour them?
 What is the duty of servants to their masters, and of
 masters to their servants?
 What is the promise annexed to this commandment?

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt do no murder.

It having pleased God to make man in His Own image,
 and so capable of living in the other world, as well as this;
 although He hath given him power over all other creatures
 that live only upon earth, and nowhere else, so that he may
 at any time take away their life: yet He doth not suffer one
 man to take away the life of another, and so despatch him
 out of this into the other world, till He Himself is pleased
 to send for him. For He sends no man hither but upon
 business, and gives him time to do it in, so much as He

sees good: but that He reserves wholly to Himself, and will not have any man shorten the time that He hath given another wherein to do His work. And He hath signified His will in this commandment, ‘Thou shalt do no murder;’ or, thou shalt not take away the life of another man.

Not that this was the first time that He had revealed this to be His will: for this, as well as the rest of these commandments, was from the beginning. But, by reason of the indispensable necessity of having this universally observed, that men might live and follow His business peaceably and quietly together, without being in continual fear of one another, He repeated this to Noah, with this severe sanction, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man.” Gen. 9. 6. Where we may likewise observe, that man’s being made in the image of God, is given for the reason of this law, as I intimated before.

And here He publisheth it again, together with the rest of His laws that are of perpetual and universal obligation, that all men may take notice of it. But lest any should mistake His meaning, He Himself was pleased afterwards to explain it, saying, that if any man smite another with an instrument of iron, by throwing a stone, or with his hand, or any other way, “out of hatred or enmity, so that he dieth,” Num. 35. 16, &c. that man is a murderer, he breaks this law, and therefore he shall surely be put to death.

But if one man happens to kill another, as we say, ‘by chance medley,’ without having any enmity against him, or design to do him any harm, in that case God appointed cities of refuge for such a man to fly to, that he might not die, which shows that in that case the man had not broken this law: he was not properly guilty of murder. And the reason is given by God Himself, saying, “He that smiteth a man so that he die, shall be surely put to death. But if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand, then I will appoint him a place whither he shall flee.” Ex. 21. 12, 13. For from hence it appears, that in this case God Himself delivered him that was killed into the hands of him that killed him, who was therefore only the instrument in it, executing the will of God, Who hath absolute dominion over all men’s lives, and

ver. 11, 12,
26; Deut. 19.
2-4.

Num. 35.
25, 28.

Who therefore allowed such a man the benefit of the sanctuary or city of refuge. But he must continue in the nature of a prisoner, and not have his perfect liberty “till the death of the High Priest,” to put him in mind, that though he was not guilty of murder, yet he had contracted so much guilt by being accessory to another man’s death, though it was only for want of due care and consideration in him, that he could not be fully pardoned but by the death of Jesus Christ, the true High-Priest.

Rom. 13. 4.

For the same reason, also, when a man is condemned by the law to die, they who pronounce or execute the sentence, and accordingly put him to death, do not transgress this law. There were many offences which God Himself, in Moses, commanded to be punished with death, particularly this of murder. Wherefore they who put such offenders to death, did not break, but execute the command of God. So it is still: the magistrate is the “minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil,” and therefore, when he condemneth a man according to law, he doeth it only as God’s minister. And they who put the man to death, do it not out of malice or hatred, but in obedience to those whom God hath set over them, and employed to send such a person to give account to Him of all his actions: wherefore they are no way guilty of breaking this law, which was made for men to observe, not for God, Who may take away any man’s life when He pleaseth.

Matt. 5. 21-
23.

But we must not think that nothing is here forbidden but actual murdering, or killing a man out of malice and design. For the Lawgiver Himself hath taught us otherwise, saying, “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. Wherefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,” &c. Whereby He hath given us to understand, that when He said, “Thou shalt not kill,” He did not forbid only the very

act of one man's killing another, but every thing that tends towards it, or may be any way the occasion of his doing or attempting it. Wherefore all anger, hatred, and malice, all reproachful and provoking language, all strife and contention, all pride, ambition, lust, jealousy, and revenge, and whatsoever usually doth, or ever may, set one man against another, so as to kill or maim, or any way hurt his body, is here forbidden under the name of murder. And therefore St. John saith, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." 1 John 3. 15.

And by necessary consequence, you are all here commanded to be meek, and patient, and gentle, to one another; "to put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, Col. 3. 12, 14. meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so must ye do. And above all these things, to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness," so as to "love your enemies, to bless them that curse Matt. 5. 44. you, to do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." If you do these things, you can never fall into that horrid sin which is here forbidden.

QUESTIONS.

For what reason was this law made?

When was it first made?

How is he that breaks it to be punished?

What is here meant by 'murder'?

Is he that kills a man by chance guilty of it?

Why is he not?

Are they guilty of it who condemn or execute a man according to law?

What is here forbidden besides actual murder?

What is here commanded?

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.

When God at first made mankind, He made them male Gen. 5. 2. and female, and called them both Adam, they being both

Gen. 2. 24;
Matt. 19. 5.

but one flesh, as He ordained them to be; and not only them, but every man and woman that should afterwards be joined together in marriage. They are thereby so united as to become "one flesh," and should therefore live together, as to all conjugal affections, as if there was never another man or woman in the world but themselves. And so they would most certainly have lived, if man had continued in his first estate.

But by the fall of our first parents, our nature is so corrupted, that notwithstanding this union into one flesh, one or other, if not both parties so joined together, are often prone to run after strange flesh, which is not their own, and perhaps another's. Which, if it should be permitted and generally practised, would not only frustrate the end of this holy institution, but it would breed such confusion and disorder in the world, that a great part, if not all mankind, would degenerate so far as to become little better in this respect than brute beasts, if not much worse; brutes themselves generally observing the laws and rules which God hath set them much better than such men do it.

1 Cor. 7. 2.
ver. 9.

By this we may see into the necessity of making, and likewise into the true meaning of this law, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' For hereby Almighty God commandeth, that no man use any woman in a conjugal way, but one that is really his wife, and so his own flesh: and that no woman use any man so, but one that is joined to her in marriage, so as to become one flesh with her. And therefore, that he who hath not a wife, and she who hath not a husband, must use none at all as such, until they have. And they who have not the gift of continency, nor power over their own wills, must marry; as God requires by His Apostle, saying, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." "For it is better to marry than to burn."

Matt. 5. 27,
28.

But that is not all: for He that made this law, and therefore best knows the true meaning and extent of it, hath been pleased to interpret it of adultery and fornication, not only in the act, but likewise in the very thought: "Ye have heard," saith He, "that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you,

That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." From whence it appears, that every motion or inclination of a man's mind to lust after strange flesh, is a breach of this law, although it never break forth into act, nor go any further than the heart. Which should make all people set a strict watch and guard over their hearts, seeing that adulteries and fornications do not only proceed from thence, as our Lord hath taught us, but (as He here teacheth) they may be also committed there, and so expose a man to all the judgments that God hath threatened against this sin, as well as the outward commission of it. Matt. 15. 19.

And verily, the judgments which God hath threatened against the breach of this law, are very severe and terrible. For, not to insist upon the punishments He appointed for it in the Old Testament, in the New we read, that "marriage is honourable, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." "For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Wherefore all had need beware of this sin; especially Christians, to whom the Apostle saith, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the member of Christ, and make it the member of an harlot? God forbid." "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour: not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles that know not God." "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh Saints." Heb. 13. 4.
Eph. 5. 5, 6;
Col. 3. 6.
1 Cor. 6. 15,
16, 18.
1 Thess. 4.
3-5.
Eph. 5. 3.

Neither is it enough to avoid what is here expressly forbidden; but every one must do what is implied here to be commanded by God; even that every husband and wife, being but 'one flesh,' should have but 'one heart' and 'one mind' between them: that "they do not defraud one another." That the husband 'love' his wife as 'himself,' and the wife her husband as 'herself.' And as the husband 1 Cor. 7. 5.
Eph. 5. 33.

1 Pet. 3. 7. must "give honour to the wife," so must the wife "submit unto and reverence her husband." And 'both' must not only be true and faithful to one another, but must strive all they can to promote one another's good, both temporal and spiritual. And both they that are, and they that are not married, must be sober, chaste, and modest in their dress, discourse, and behaviour; so as not to excite, but suppress, as much as in them lies, all unclean thoughts, both in themselves and others.

And as for them who have heretofore transgressed this Holy Commandment, in thought, word, or deed, they must repent of their sin, and turn sincerely from it, while they may, and as soon as possibly they can. For which purpose,

Gal. 5. 24. they must "crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

Col. 3. 5. They must "mortify their members that are upon the earth." They must not come near such places or company as are apt to raise in them any lustful or lascivious thoughts, and so incline them to this horrid sin. They must avoid drunken-

1 Cor. 9. 25. ness and gluttony, as 'deadly poison.' They must be "temperate in all things." They must 'fast,' and "watch, and pray, that they may not enter into temptation." They

[Matt. 26. 41.] "must not make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof;" but must follow the example of the Holy Apostle,

Rom. 13. 14. who said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a cast-away."

1 Cor. 9. 27.

QUESTIONS.

What reason was there for this law?

What is the general meaning of it?

Is not adultery and fornication in the heart here forbidden?

What judgments hath God threatened against those who break this law?

Are not Christians, in a more especial manner, bound to keep it?

What are the duties here commanded?

What must they do who have broken this Commandment?

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

Seeing Almighty God, 'by the Word of His power,' at first [Heb. 1.3.] created, and still preserveth and upholdeth all things that are; all things that are must needs be His, and He may dispose of them as He pleaseth. And so He doth: He disposeth of all and every thing that is in Heaven or earth; particularly all the houses, lands, cattle, monies, goods, or the riches, as men call them, of this life; they are all His, and wholly at His disposal; and He accordingly gives them how, and when, and to whom He will. So that whatsoever any man hath, and howsoever he came by it, whether by inheritance, gift, or purchase, by his wit or valour, by any office or calling, by his care and industry, or any other lawful way, it still comes originally from God; Who distributeth the necessities, the accommodations, and the conveniences of this life to all men, to some more, to some less, as He Himself sees good. And whatsoever He gives, or puts into the hands of any man, although He still reserveth to Himself His Own propriety in it, so that He may take it away again when He pleaseth; yet He thereby gives that man so much right and title to it, that it is his own, in respect of all other men: no other man hath any thing to do with it, but only he; and he alone must give account of the use of it to God, from Whom he received, and under Whom he holds it. Which he could not do if another man should take it from him.

Wherefore, to secure and confirm to every man both the civil right, and the use of what He sees good to put into his hands, God was pleased to make and publish this law, for all mankind to observe, 'Thou shalt not steal;' that is to say, Thou shalt not take from another man any thing that is his, or that God hath given him: thou shalt not take it by force, or by fraud, neither openly nor secretly: thou shalt not take it out of his house, or shop, or fields, or barns, or pockets, nor upon the highway, nor anywise whatsoever, without his consent and will.

For we must not understand this law only of that which

we commonly call ‘ theft,’ or ‘ robbery;’ but of every unlawful or indirect way, whereby it is possible for one man to come at that which God hath given another: whether it be by forgery, perjury, or suborning witnesses in courts of judicature; by lying, dissembling, or concealing the truth; by false measures, false weights, or false lights; by extortion, oppression, or false accusation; by defrauding, cheating, or over-reaching in any contract or bargain; or any otherwise than such as God allows and approves of, for the transferring the things of this world from one man to another; so that He Himself may be truly said to do it. For whosoever getteth the possession of what belongs to another, any otherwise than what is agreeable to the revealed will and Word of God, he breaketh this commandment; ‘ he stealeth.’

But that no man certainly would do, if he would but first consider what he doeth. For this is to usurp upon the prerogative of God Himself; to take that away which He gives, and which He gives for His Own use, to be employed in His service, and for His honour. And therefore he will be sure to revenge Himself of such as shall presume to deprive that man of it, to whom He was pleased to give it; as He hath assured us by His Apostle, requiring, that “ no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because that the Lord is the Revenger of all such.”

Wherefore this is one of the two sins for which He sends His ‘ curse’ upon the earth, which “ enters into the house of the thief, remains there,” and “ consumes it with the very timber and stones thereof.” And accordingly we commonly see that what is unjustly gotten brings a curse upon that which is also gotten justly, and upon him too that got it; for, “ as the partridge sitteth upon eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at the end shall be a fool.” And that which is worst of all, ‘ thieves,’ and ‘ extortioners’ are reckoned among those who “ shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.”

But what then must they do who have transgressed this holy commandment, that they may escape the vengeance and judgment of God? They must first follow the advice of

St. Paul, or rather the command of God by him, "Let him Eph. 4. 28. that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth;" and then they must follow the example of Zaccheus. They must restore what they have Luke 19. 8. unjustly gotten, if not 'fourfold,' as he did, at least the thing itself, or the full value of it, with interest for all the time they have had and used it: for till they do that, they still live in the breach of this law, and can never be said to keep it, till they have made full restitution of whatsoever they have gotten by breaking it. And if they cannot find the persons themselves to whom they ought to restore it, they must restore it to God, the head Landlord, or Supreme Proprietor of all things in the world, by giving it to some pious or charitable use. They must in that case restore to Him what they have stolen from men, as well as what they have stolen from God Himself, by taking or converting to their own use any thing that hath been given, consecrated, or dedicated to Him: which is the worst sort of stealing; the stealing that which is 'sacred,' therefore called 'sacrilege,' Rom. 2. 22. and the 'devouring that which is holy,' which, unless vomited up again, will certainly be a 'snare' to them. Prov. 20. 25.

From hence, you may easily observe, that you are all here positively commanded to be true and just in all your dealings: to "render unto all their dues; tribute to whom Rom. 13. 7, tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, 8. honour to whom honour:" to "owe no man any thing, but to love one another;" to promote as much as you can one another's good and welfare: to "do to all men as ye would Matt. 7. 12. they should do to you;" to take care to pay whatsoever any man can justly demand of you, and to give what you are able to the relief of those who want it: for that is a debt which God hath charged upon your estates; which unless you discharge and pay, you wrong the poor, and so break this commandment.

QUESTIONS.

Who gives all men what they have?

Have men a right to what God hath given them?

Wherefore doth God forbid men to steal?

What is here meant by stealing ?

Are not all unlawful ways of getting here forbidden ?

How are they punished that break this law ?

What must they do who have broken it ?

How must restitution be made when the person wronged cannot be found ?

What is here positively commanded ?

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

There is nothing in the make or frame of man but what is an admirable instance of the infinite wisdom and power of his Maker ; particularly, that He hath so contrived it, that we can discover the thoughts and affections of our souls, only by moving our tongues several ways, which we call ‘ speaking ;’ without which we could have no society together, no more than brute beasts have. Whereas by this means we can communicate to one another all our opinions, desires, hopes, fears, designs, and whatsoever else can come into our minds. Insomuch, that although we cannot look into one another’s hearts, yet one man may know what another thinks there, as well as he that thinks it.

But for that purpose it is necessary that every man should always speak as he thinks ; otherwise we can never certainly know one another’s thoughts, no more than as if we did not speak at all ; and so God would lose His end in giving us this power, and we the great benefit and use of it. For the prevention of which, with many other mischiefs, which the tongue, as it is now become “ an unruly evil,” is apt to betray men into, Almighty God our Maker hath been pleased to give us rules how to use it aright. He before taught us how to speak of Himself, or to use His Name : and here He teacheth us how to speak or use our tongues, in respect of one another.

James 3. 8.

This, therefore, is the general rule or law that He hath given for every man to observe whensoever he speaks to or of another man, “ Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour :” or rather, as the words in the original text may be interpreted, ‘ Thou shalt not bear false witness of thy

neighbour : ' that is, thou shalt never speak any thing of thy neighbour but what is true, either for him or against him. So our Lord, the Lawgiver Himself, and His Apostle after Him, interpret the words in general, " Thou shalt not bear false witness." And therefore all ' false witness,' or speaking that which is false, of or concerning our ' neighbour,' that is, concerning any man whatsoever, is here forbidden. Matt. 19. 18;
Rom. 13. 9.

And so is all ' lying,' too, or speaking that which is not true to him, as well as of him. According to that other law, where the next before and this are put and explained together, " Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another." Wherefore the Apostle requires all men " to put away lying, and to speak every man truth with his neighbour." And by consequence, all slandering, false accusing, and backbiting one another, is here forbidden; for that is all ' lying : ' and so is ' judging ' or ' censuring ' one another too. For no man perfectly knowing another's heart or state, can possibly pass a true and certain judgment upon him. And therefore every man is expressly forbidden to do it. For the same reason also, we are commanded " to speak evil of no man," lest what we say of him should happen to be false, as we do not know but it may, and so break this commandment, which requireth us ' not to bear false witness ' either for or against our neighbour. Lev. 19. 11.
Eph. 4. 25;
Col. 3. 9.

And verily, although the general practice of the world seems to argue as if this commandment was repealed or out of date, it is certainly of the same force with the rest, and as necessary to be observed as any commandment whatsoever. Let us hear what the Judge of the world hath told us beforehand, concerning His proceeding at the Last Day in this matter : " But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the Day of Judgment : for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Matt. 12. 36,
37.

And if men must give account of every ' idle word,' what account must they give of lying and slandering one another? What can they who live in this sin expect, but to be condemned to that everlasting fire which is prepared for the " father of lies ? " " They are of their father the Devil, and the lusts of their father they do," and therefore must be ch. 25. 41.

John 8. 44. punished equally with him. He is the 'father of lies,' and is called the 'Devil,' that is, the 'accuser,' from his false
 Rev. 12. 10. accusing and slandering the brethren, and so from the breach of this commandment.

Which therefore all must keep, as ever they desire not to be like him, the Devil, both in what he doeth and in what he suffereth; and as they desire, too, not to be 'thieves' and 'murderers;' it being usual for men's whole estates, and their lives also, to be taken away by lying and bearing false witness against them. For they who allow themselves in this sin are usually left to themselves; as they give themselves to 'tell' lies, God gives them up to 'believe' lies, and suffers them to fall into all manner of vice and wickedness; every lie and liar being 'an abomination to Him' Who is truth itself. And then it is no wonder, that "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie," shall be shut out of Heaven; and that "all liars shall have their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone."

Wherefore it behoves you all to take special care of observing what is here commanded. As God hath given you the power of expressing your minds to one another, for your mutual benefit and comfort, beware of frustrating His holy end in giving it, by abusing it to one another's prejudice and wrong. For which purpose, you must lay aside that wicked custom of talking of other people: or if you must needs be doing it, at least talk of their virtues only behind their backs, and of their vices never but before their faces, so as to reprove and "restore them in the spirit of meekness." But rather, instead of speaking of one man's faults to another, you must strive all you can to conceal other men's as well as your own.

Above all, you must beware of lying, or speaking falsely to one another, upon any account whatsoever, although it was possible for you to get never so much by it: for you can never get so much as you lose by it. By it you lose the favour of Almighty God, which is worth more than all the world besides. Wherefore, as you tender His love, and your own welfare, you must make it your constant care and study to "speak the truth from your hearts," as becometh honest and good men, and never to say any thing but what you

believe to be not only true, but some way or other beneficial to those who hear it; according to that excellent rule which God hath given you, as a full interpretation of this law, by His Apostle, saying, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Eph. 4. 29. Remember the words of St. James: "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." James 3. 2.

QUESTIONS.

What is the use and end of speaking?

Wherefore hath God given us laws about it?

What is here meant by 'bearing false witness'?

Who is our 'neighbour'?

What necessity is there of avoiding what is here forbidden?

How shall liars, and all breakers of this law, be punished?

What must we do, that we may always keep this commandment?

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his servant, nor his maid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is his.

It being impossible that any state or society of men should subsist without some government, or that government without laws: as we find no place where any considerable number of men live together, but they have some sort of government or other among them, so all sorts of governors have always found it necessary to make some laws or other, to be observed by those that live under their respective governments. But all the laws that were ever made by any governors upon earth respected only the words and actions, or the outward carriage and behaviour of their subjects. None ever offered to give laws to the minds or hearts of men, what they should think, or love, or desire, or the like: and it would have been ridiculous and absurd to have done

it; because they could never have known whether such laws were observed or no: forasmuch as it is impossible for one man to know what another thinks, or how he stands affected in his heart, unless he himself discover it by words, or some overt act. And if he doth that, it is not his thoughts and affections, but his words or actions, that come under the cognizance of other men.

Herein, therefore, as well as in all other respects, the laws of God infinitely exceed all other, in that they are prescribed to the very minds of men, to their thoughts, and the most secret motions of their hearts, as well as to their outward actions. Which is also a most clear and undeniable argument that these laws were made by the all-wise God, and by none else. For none but He knows the hearts of men; and therefore none but He can give any laws to them.

As we see He doth in this Commandment, requiring us ‘not to covet’ or ‘desire’ any thing that is another’s. He had before tied up our hands from stealing any thing from one another: but here He ties up our hearts too from having any desires or inclinations to it, saying, “Thou shalt not covet,” or thou shalt not desire, ‘thy neighbour’s house, or wife, or man, or maid, or ox, or ass, or any thing that is his.’ That is, what God hath given to another man, from the greatest to the least thing that is, thou shalt not so much as ‘desire’ to have it from him, unless he be willing to part with it, and hath full satisfaction made unto him for it.

This is a law much to be observed for the nature as well as for the great force and obligation of it. For, as St. Paul saith, “I had not known sin, but by the Law; for I had not known lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” We had not known that mere lust, desire, or coveting, that goes no farther than the heart, had been a sin, if it had not been here forbidden. But here we see that it is as great a sin to covet or desire, as it is to steal a man’s goods; that covetousness is as bad as theft: for the same law forbids both. And therefore all the disorders and irregularities of a man’s heart, as well as the enormities of his life; as, all “high” and “proud thoughts” of a man’s self, all “foolish”

Rom. 7. 7.

ch. 12. 3.

Ps. 94. 11;
1John 2. 15;
Col. 3. 2;
Jer. 4. 14.
1John 2. 16.

James 1. 14,
15.

Prov. 4. 23.

And therefore you had need take special care to keep your hearts always right with God, inclined wholly to Him, and fully content and satisfied with what He, in His infinite

- Heb. 13. 5. wisdom, sees good to bestow upon you. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have," and then ye will find it easy, by God's assistance, to walk in all these "Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless," as Zacharias and Elizabeth did.
- Luke 1. 6.

These are those Ten Commandments which Almighty God, the Maker and Governor of the whole world, positively requireth all mankind to keep, and which you promised to keep when you were baptized; and so are doubly bound to do it, both by God's command and your own promise. And that you may the better know how to do it, our blessed Saviour, into Whom you were baptized, hath reduced them all to two general heads: for being asked, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Upon these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." That is, the due observation of all that God hath commanded, either in His Law, or by His Prophets that explained it, depends upon our sincere love to God and to our neighbour.

Matt. 22. 36, 37, 40.

He that loves God with all his soul, cannot but keep all the Commandments of the First Table, that have an immediate respect to God, Whom his soul loveth. And he that loves his neighbour as himself, will do him no more hurt than he would have done unto himself, and therefore will keep all the Commandments of the Second Table that respect his neighbour as he desires his neighbours should keep them towards him. So that he who keeps his heart aright towards God and towards men, according to the purport of this last Commandment, can never wilfully break any of the Ten, but will strive all he can, by the grace of God, not only to keep them all, but to do it out of pure love and obedience to Him.

Now from what you have heard upon them, you may easily observe, that there are 'two things' which you 'chiefly learn from these Commandments;' your 'duty towards God,' and your 'duty towards your neighbour.' That your duty

towards God is, ‘to believe in Him, to fear Him, and to love Him with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength; to worship Him, to give Him thanks, to put your whole trust in Him, to call upon Him, to honour His Holy Name and Word, and to serve Him truly all the days of your life.’ And that your duty towards your neighbour is, ‘to love him as yourself, and to do unto all men as you would they should do unto you: to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him: to submit yourselves to all your governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters: to order yourselves lowly and reverently to all your betters: to hurt nobody by word or deed: to be true and just in all your dealings: to bear no malice nor hatred in your hearts: to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and your tongues from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering: to keep your bodies in temperance, soberness, and chastity: not to covet nor desire other men’s goods, but to learn and labour truly to get your own living, and to do your duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call you.’

QUESTIONS.

Did any earthly governors ever make laws for the hearts of men?

Why did they not?

Hath God made any such?

Where do you find such a law?

What do you mean by coveting?

May you covet nothing that is another man’s?

Is mere coveting a breach of this law?

Why is this law placed last?

From whence comes all sin?

What must a man do, that he may keep this and all the commands?

To how many heads doth our Lord reduce all the Commandments?

What do you chiefly learn by these Commandments?

What is your duty towards God?

What is your duty towards your neighbour?

PART IV. THE LORD'S PRAYER.

CATECHIST. *My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the Commandments of God, and to serve Him, without His special grace, which thou must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer. Let me hear, therefore, if thou canst say the Lord's Prayer.*

ANSWER. *Our Father Which art in Heaven; hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.*

HE that is not sensible of his own weakness, will never look out for help. Wherefore it is necessary for all to know this, that they are not able of themselves, or by their own natural power, to keep God's Commandments: for,

2 Cor. 3. 5. "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." And although He giveth all men so much grace or power to do His will, as makes them inexcusable before Him, if they do it not; yet, notwithstanding, none do all that is required of them, without something more than what is common to all men, therefore called His 'special grace,' which He giveth in a special manner to those who, believing in Jesus Christ, the One Mediator between God and men, have Him to intercede for them, that they may have it: Who therefore saith,

John 15. 5. "Without Me ye can do nothing." But, as His Apostle

Phil. 4. 13. said, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me."

This 'special grace,' therefore, we must 'learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer.' For as we read in the

James 1. 5. Epistle of St. James: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." And our Saviour Him-

Luke 11. 13. self saith, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your

Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

And if His Holy Spirit, then His 'special grace:' it being by His Holy Spirit that we are sanctified, and specially enabled to keep His Holy Commandments. This, therefore, we must learn to call for, not only now and then, but at all times, every day at least, twice or thrice, if not oftener, either at church or in our closets; and that, too, not in a careless, indifferent manner, but by diligent, hearty, and earnest prayer.

And having no ground to expect any such special grace or favour at the hands of God, but only through Jesus Christ our Lord, we must learn to pray for it in His Name, Who said, "If ye ask any thing in My Name, I will do it." John 14. 14; 16. 23. And therefore having His word for it, when we have asked it, we must believe and trust on Him for it; not doubting but that He, according to His promise, will give it us, in the use of the means which He hath ordained and appointed for that end; such as private and public prayers, fasting and watching, and humbling ourselves before God, reading and hearing His most Holy Word, and receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; which are, therefore, called 'the means of grace,' because it is by them that God ordinarily conferreth His 'special grace' upon us.

But we not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Lord, even our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, was graciously pleased to compose a prayer for us; and commanded, that when we pray, we should say that: "When ye pray," (saith Luke 11. 2. He), "say, Our Father which art in Heaven," &c. Not but that we may say other prayers too; but we must say that, whensoever we pray, both because He hath commanded it, and because it is the only prayer that we are sure is perfectly agreeable to the will of God, as being made by Himself; and most acceptable to Him, as being given us by Him, by Whom alone any of our prayers or duties are accepted of Him.

So that when we pray in the very words, as well as in the Name of our Mediator, we have no reason to doubt but our prayers shall be heard, and all the good things we asked shall be granted to us, through His merits and mediation;

that is to say, for the sake, or upon the account of His death, whereby He merited, or deserved and purchased for us, all the good things we can desire: and by the power of that mediation or intercession, which He, by virtue of His said death, is continually making at the right hand of God the Father for us.

And besides, although we may use many other words, there is nothing that we can ever want or desire, that is really good for us, or necessary either for life or godliness, but we ask it in this prayer of our Lord's composure; and that too in the same method, and in such terms as He Himself would have us ask it in, by Whose mediation only it can be granted.

Hence it is that the Church, in His Name, requires every one of her members to learn this Prayer; and here asketh, by her Catechist, or him that catechiseth them, whether they can say it. Not doubting, but if they can say this Prayer aright, they may obtain God's special grace to keep His Commandments, and to serve Him faithfully all the days of their life. But for that purpose it is necessary that they should understand the true meaning and extent of every expression of it.

First, therefore, we here call Almighty God "Our Father," and so address ourselves and our prayers to Him, not as He is only the Supreme Governor of the world, absolutely in Himself considered, but as He is related to us so as to be

John 1. 12. Our Father. But He is Our Father only in Jesus Christ; and therefore it is in His Name only that we say this prayer: and none can truly say it, but such as are baptized into Him, and made members of His body, and so are become the children of God in Him. And every one that is thus made a child of God, although He saith this prayer only by Himself as well as together with others; yet notwithstanding, He doth not say, 'My Father,' but 'Our Father:' because he saith this prayer only as he is a member of Christ, and so in communion and conjunction with all the members of his body, children of the same Father. "Which is in Heaven:" that is, Who rules and reigns on high over the whole world, and therefore can give us whatsoever we ask.

"Hallowed be Thy name:" that is, as if we should say, 'holied,' or 'sanctified be Thy name;' let it be acknowledged and accounted holy, infinitely above all other names, and accordingly admired, celebrated, glorified, and praised by all the creatures in the world. So that in this, we both pray that His Name may be sanctified by all others, and we do it ourselves: for hereby we join in effect with the holy Angels, in singing, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts: Isa. 6. 3. the whole earth is full of His glory," which is the first thing that we here desire and do, because it is the first and chief end of all things.

"Thy Kingdom come." That is, let the Kingdom and power of Thy grace come into our hearts: let Thy Holy Spirit rule there, subdue us to Thyself, and rest continually upon us; that by Thy 'special grace' preventing, exciting, assisting, and strengthening us, we may serve and honour Thee, our Almighty King and Governor, all the days of our life. And let the Kingdom of Thy glory come, let it come quickly, that we may all glorify and enjoy Thee together.

"Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven." That is, grant, we beseech Thee, that we and all mankind may, by Thy assistance and grace, perfectly submit to, obey, and do Thy will on earth; and the holy Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, do it continually in Heaven: that we may be perfect as they are, and fulfil Thy Holy Will perfectly as they do.

"Give us this day our daily bread." That is, give us, we humbly beseech Thee, the Author and Giver of all good gifts, give us this, and so every day, all things necessary both for life and godliness, both for our souls and bodies.

"Feed us with food convenient for us," and supply us continually of Thy infinite goodness, with all such things as Thou knowest to be anywise needful for us in this mortal state. Prov. 30. 8.

"And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." That is, as we, from the bottom of our hearts, forgive all the wrongs and injuries that other men have done us; so be Thou graciously pleased, of Thy infinite mercy in Jesus Christ, to forgive all the trespasses, transgressions, or sins, that we have ever committed against Thee,

so as never to punish us for any of them, either in this world or that which is to come.

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” That is, lead us not Thyself, nor suffer us to be led by the Devil, our ghostly enemy, nor by any other, into any temptation or trial that may be too hard for us, so as to cause us to fall ; but deliver us from the Evil One, and from all manner of evil, both of sin and misery. So that we here pray for every thing that is or can be good for us : it being a great evil to want any thing that is good.

Here endeth this Divine Prayer, as it was once delivered
Luke 11. 2. by Our Lord. But at the delivery of it another time, He
Matt. 6. 13. added, “For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” And therefore our Church, following His example, in her Liturgy sometimes accordingly omits, and sometimes adds those words, called the Doxology, or giving glory, as setting forth the glory of God, in the reasons wherefore we ask these things of Him ; even because ‘His is the Kingdom,’ or empire of the world ; He rules over all, and hath all things at His command : and ‘His is the power ;’ He can do what He will, and therefore can give us whatsoever we ask, if He please : and ‘His is the glory ;’ it is for His glory that we ask these things, that the glory of His Divine perfections may shine forth more clearly among us ; the glory of His mercy and truth, in granting them to us ; and the glory of His power and supreme authority in effecting them for us. And all the glory that shall arise from our having, using, and improving of them, will redound wholly to Him, and be for ever His.

And then we conclude with saying, “Amen ;” which, in Hebrew, signifies both ‘so be it,’ and ‘so it is ;’ whereby we therefore both repeat or renew our desires of what we have asked ; and likewise express our trust and confidence, that Our Heavenly Father will accept of what we have done, and grant all that we have desired of Him, for the glory of His great Name, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

QUESTIONS.

Can you of yourselves keep God’s Commandments ?

Do any keep them without His ‘special grace ?’

What is His 'special grace?'

How may we obtain that grace?

How must we pray for it?

In whose name must we pray?

What are those means of grace wherein He usually gives it?

Who made that which is called the Lord's Prayer?

Why must we always say that prayer?

What do you mean when you say in your prayers, 'through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ?'

Do you pray for all good things in the Lord's Prayer?

Why do you there call God 'Father?'

Why, 'Our Father?'

Why is He said to be 'in Heaven?'

What do you mean by 'hallowed be Thy Name?'

What is that 'Kingdom' of God you desire may 'come?'

What do you mean by, 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven?'

What by, 'Give us this day our daily bread?'

What by, 'Forgive us our trespasses?'

What by, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil?'

Why is the Doxology sometimes added and sometimes omitted in our common prayers?

What is meant by 'Amen?'

Q. What then desirest thou of God in this prayer?

A. I desire my Lord God, Our Heavenly Father, Who is the Giver of all goodness, to send His grace unto me, and to all people that we may worship Him, serve Him, and obey Him as we ought to do. And I pray unto God, that He will send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies; and that He will be merciful unto us, and forgive us our sins; and that it will please Him to save and defend us in all dangers ghostly and bodily; and that He will keep us from sin and wickedness, and from our ghostly enemy, and from everlasting death. And this I trust He will do of His mercy and goodness, through our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore I say, Amen. So be it.

PART V.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

SECTION I. OF THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

Q. How many Sacraments hath Christ ordained in His Church?

A. Two only, as generally necessary to Salvation; that is to say, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What meanest thou by this word 'Sacrament?'

A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.

Q. How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

A. Two, the outward visible sign, and the inward spiritual grace.

THE word Sacrament was used by ancient writers of the Church, for any sacred or holy mystery, rite, or ceremony; every one calling what holy thing he pleased a Sacrament. By which means the number of things that have been called by this name is very great and uncertain. Wherefore the question here is not, how many Sacraments there are in general, or how many things have been, or may be called sacraments; but how many Sacraments hath Christ ordained, and that too in His Church, to be always observed there?

Of such Sacraments there be two, and two only, as generally necessary to Salvation. There may be other things ordained, but not as necessary to Salvation: some as necessary to Salvation, but not generally. As the ordination or consecration of persons to holy offices. This is necessary to Salvation, because it is necessary to the right administration of the means of grace and Salvation. But it is not generally necessary: it is not necessary for all men; as if none could be saved except they be in holy orders. And therefore

neither can that be said to be ordained by Christ as generally necessary to Salvation; nor any other sacred rites, but only two; that is to say, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism was ordained by Him to be the Sacrament, or sacred rite of making Disciples, or admitting persons into the congregation and society of all Christian people, called His Church. For a little before His ascension into Heaven, He said to His Apostles, as it is in the original, "Go ye, Matt. 28. 19. therefore, and make all nations Disciples, baptizing (or, by baptizing) them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." So that, as before that time persons used to be admitted into the Church by being circumcised, according to God's institution; from that time forward, by the institution of the same God our Saviour, not only Jews, but people of all nations, are to be made His Disciples, and brought into His Church, by being baptized; that is, as the word signifies, either dipped, or washed, or sprinkled with water, 'in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' And as this was thus ordained or instituted by Christ our Saviour, it must needs be not only necessary, but generally necessary, to Salvation, seeing it is the only way or means ordained by Him, whereby to be admitted into His Church, out of which there is no Salvation.

Acts 2. 47.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained by Him the same night in which He was betrayed. For being then at supper with His Disciples, "He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to them, and said, Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." Where we see 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24; Matt. 26. 26. that what our Lord Himself then did, He ordained and commanded the same to be continued in His Church, and to be always done in remembrance of Him, until His coming again, to judge the world. And that must needs be 1 Cor. 11. 26. generally necessary to the Salvation of mankind, which is ordained by the authority and in remembrance of the only

Saviour we have in all the world, and so for the exercise and confirmation of our faith in Him, without which we can never be saved by Him.

But that we may rightly understand the nature and design of these two Sacraments, ordained by Christ in His Church, we must farther consider what is properly meant by this word ‘Sacrament,’ which is therefore here described by the general nature, by the Author, and by the ends of it. As to the general nature, ‘it is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace given unto us.’ So that in every ‘Sacrament,’ properly so called, there must be some ‘invisible spiritual grace’ or favour given unto us by God, and there must be also some ‘outward and visible sign,’ whereby the said grace is signified or represented to us. Where either of these is wanting, there is no Sacrament: where they both are, there is a Sacrament in general.

But to make it such a Sacrament as is here spoken of, it must be ‘ordained by Christ Himself,’ as the Author; not by Moses or the Prophets before Him, nor by His Apostles or His Church after Him, but ‘by Christ Himself,’ in His Own person, with His Own mouth, as we see Baptism and the Lord’s Supper were.

And as for the end of such a Sacrament, it is twofold. First, to be the ‘means’ whereby we may receive the spiritual grace there signified. For whatsoever grace God is pleased to give us, He ordinarily gives it not immediately from Himself, but in the use of some means which He hath appointed for that purpose, and which therefore operate or work upon us, not by any power in themselves, but by virtue of His institution and appointment, and by the power of His Holy Spirit, moving and working in them, upon all such as use them aright. And each of the Sacraments is such a ‘means’ ordained and appointed by God our Saviour, whereby to bestow His grace upon us, that is there signified.

The other end is, to be a ‘pledge to assure us thereof:’ for by admitting us to the Sacrament, and so applying the outward sign to us, He thereby certifies and assures us of His favour, and readiness to give us the spiritual grace signified thereby; and we ought accordingly to believe, depend,

and trust upon Him for it. And if we do that, He will certainly bestow it upon us.

From all which it appears, that in every Sacrament, properly so called, there are two parts; an ‘outward visible sign,’ and an ‘inward spiritual grace.’

QUESTIONS.

Why do we not ask, How many Sacraments there are, but, ‘How many hath Christ ordained in His Church?’

Why is it said that there are ‘two only, as generally necessary to Salvation?’

Which are those two?

When was Baptism ordained by Christ?

To what end was it ordained?

What doth the word Baptism signify in general?

Why is Baptism generally necessary to Salvation?

When was the ‘Lord’s Supper’ ordained?

What is the general nature of a Sacrament?

Who is the author or ordainer of it?

To what ends is a Sacrament ordained?

How many parts are there in a Sacrament?

SECTION II. OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

Q. *What is the outward visible sign or form in Baptism?*

A. *Water, wherein the person is baptized, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

Q. *What is the inward and spiritual grace?*

A. *A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness: for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are thereby made the children of grace.*

Q. *What is required of persons to be baptized?*

A. *Repentance, whereby they forsake sin; and faith, whereby they steadfastly believe the promises of God, made to them in that Sacrament.*

Q. *Why then are infants baptized, when, by reason of their tender age, they cannot perform them?*

A. Because they promise them both by their sureties ; which promise, when they come to age, themselves are bound to perform.

THERE are two parts, as we have heard, in every Sacrament as such, an ‘outward visible sign,’ and an ‘inward spiritual grace.’ Which being the integral or essential parts of a Sacrament, without either of which it is no sacrament at all, properly so called ; therefore, to understand the true nature of either of the Sacraments, it will be necessary to consider distinctly both these parts in it.

First, for the Sacrament of Baptism, the ‘outward visible sign’ or ‘form’ of that, whereby it is distinguished from the other Sacrament, is, ‘water,’ not simply in or by itself, but
 Matt. 28. 19. ‘water wherein the person is baptized, in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ according to the first institution of it. For although a person be ‘baptized,’ that is, dipped, sprinkled, or washed, with water, unless it be done in the Name of these Three Divine Persons, severally and distinctly pronounced, it is not the ‘Sacrament of Baptism.’ Neither is it so, although these Divine Persons be distinctly named, unless the person be at the same time baptized with water. And therefore it is not either of these singly by itself, but both together, and so the whole action of using or applying ‘water’ to a person ‘in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ that is, the ‘outward visible sign’ of this Sacrament as instituted by our Lord and Saviour.

And it is observable, that there is no language wherein those words may not be easily pronounced, so there is no habitable place where water may not be easily had ; it being the most common thing upon earth : which shews that our Lord, considering the great necessity of all men’s being within the pale of His Church, instead of the painful and troublesome Sacrament of circumcision, whereby persons were before admitted into it, was graciously pleased to institute and ordain the most easy and obvious sign that could be invented for it ; that no man might pretend any trouble or difficulty in it. But all must acknowledge that in this,

as well as in other respects, "His yoke is easy, and His burden is light." Matt. 11. 30.

As that is the 'outward and visible sign' in this Sacrament, so the 'inward and spiritual grace' signified by that sign, is a 'death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' That both these are signified in the Sacrament of Baptism, we learn from the Apostle, saying, "Therefore we are buried with Him by Baptism unto death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life." For here 'death' is plainly taken in a spiritual sense, for 'death unto sin,' that is, for our ceasing to live any longer in it. But the Apostle saith, ch. 6. 2. that we are 'baptized unto this death.' And therefore this 'death' must needs be 'signified' in Baptism; wherein, as our bodies are washed with water from their filth, so our souls are washed by the blood of Christ from sin; not only from the guilt of sin, for its pardon or remission, but likewise from the strength and power of it, for its mortification, Acts 2. 38; 22. 16. that 'sin may not have dominion over us,' who being baptized, are "not under the Law, but under grace." Rom. 6. 14.

Which 'death unto sin' is necessarily accompanied with, or rather it is effected by, 'a new birth unto righteousness;' that we may walk for the future 'in newness of life,' as the Apostle speaks in the words above mentioned. And that this great spiritual grace or favour is bestowed upon us, and therefore is signified in Baptism, appears also from its being "the washing of regeneration," wherein, as our Lord Himself, who ordained it, speaks, we are regenerated, or "born again of water and the Holy Ghost." Tit. 3. 5. John 3. 5.

For by nature we are all born in sin. Every one may say with David, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Psa. 51. 5. For seeing we all proceed from the loins of our first parents, and were then contained in them when they fell into sin, and by consequence under God's displeasure; we fell in them, and with them, and so come into the world both guilty of, and defiled with, original sin: which therefore (as the Church hath declared) 'standeth not in the following of Adam, but is the fault and corruption of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby a man is far gone from

original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil.' And therefore it is called 'original sin;' because our nature, from its original or first conception, was corrupted with it. So that we are all 'by nature the children of wrath,' continually subject and obnoxious to the wrath and indignation of the Almighty Creator of the world, with

Eph. 2. 3.

all the dismal consequents and effects of it. But by Baptism we are made, as we have seen already, 'the members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven;' and so the 'children of grace:' and because

1 Pet. 3. 7.

children, therefore "heirs also of the grace of life."

Now there are two things required of all persons, in order to their being thus baptized: first, 'repentance, whereby they forsake sin;' according to that saying of St.

Acts 2. 38.

Peter, "Repent and be baptized." Wherefore, when a person is to be baptized, he is first asked, in the Name of God, and in the presence of the congregation, as witnesses of it, whether he doth renounce and will forsake all manner of sins? To which he answereth, 'I renounce them all.' And if he makes this answer heartily, sincerely, and with a good conscience, so as afterwards to perform what he then promised, he partakes of the grace signified in this Sacrament, and is certainly saved by it; according to that of the

1 Pet. 3. 21.

same Apostle, where he saith, that "Baptism doth now save us: not (the outward sign) the putting away the filth of the flesh, but (the inward grace) the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The other condition required is 'faith,' whereby they steadfastly believe in Jesus Christ, and the promises which God, in Him, hath made and confirmed to them 'in that Sacrament.' That this is required, appears from what is recorded concerning Philip's baptizing of the eunuch: for when the eunuch said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And when the eunuch had said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," Philip immediately baptized him. And accordingly, when any one comes or is brought to Holy Baptism, he must first make profession of his faith, before the Sacrament can be administered to him; unless it be in some extra-

Acts 8. 36,
38.

ordinary cases, wherein he is allowed and required to do it afterwards, when he is publicly received into the Church.

But ‘Why then are infants baptized, when by reason of their tender age they cannot perform these conditions?’ The reason is, not only because they have the seeds of repentance and faith in them, which may afterwards grow up to perfection; but chiefly, because they then ‘promise to perform them.’ Which is as much as we know adult persons, or those of riper years, do. They only profess and promise to repent and believe: but whether they really do so, or ever will, is known only to God. So infants make the same profession and promise, though not in their own persons, yet by their sureties or guardians, which do it in their name and stead: and when they come to age, they are as much bound to perform what they so promised, as if they had done it themselves, in their own person. (As was observed and more fully shewn in the beginning of the Catechism.)

QUESTIONS.

What are the two parts of a Sacrament?

What is the ‘outward sign’ in baptism?

Is water alone the sign?

Why is so common a thing as ‘water’ used in it?

What is the ‘spiritual grace’ here signified?

What do you mean by ‘a death unto sin?’

How do you prove that is signified in Baptism?

How doth it appear that we are therein ‘born again?’

How were we born at first?

What is ‘original sin?’

How do you prove that ‘repentance’ and ‘faith’ are required of persons to be baptized?

How then do ‘infants’ profess and promise to do them?

SECTION III. OF THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.

Q. Why was the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper ordained?

A. For the continual remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Q. What is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper?

A. Bread and wine, which the Lord commanded to be received.

Q. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

A. The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

Q. What are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?

A. The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.

WHEN our ever-blessed Redeemer instituted the Sacrament of His Last Supper, He said, "This do in remembrance of Me;" whereby He laid His command upon His Apostles there present, and, in them, upon His Church in all ages, that they should continue this His holy institution 'in remembrance of Him,' or of that death which He was the next day to suffer for the sins of the world; and that they should do it all along, until His coming again. As we learn also from His Apostle, saying, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

This, therefore, is to be always done, 'for the continual remembrance of His death,' as it was a 'sacrifice' for the sins of the world; therefore called here 'the sacrifice of the death of Christ.' For, as the Apostle informs us from Him, "He once in the end of the world appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;" "Who needed not daily, as the priests under the Law, to offer up sacrifices first for His Own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself." He then offered up Himself as a "propitiation," or propitiatory sacrifice, "for the sins of the whole world."

And therefore His death was not only a true and proper sacrifice, but the only true and proper sacrifice for sin that was ever offered up in the world. For His being offered up for the sins of the whole world, there was no sin for which any other need or could be offered up. Or if there had been, no other could have taken it away: "For it is not possible

that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." Yet such only were all the 'sacrifices,' as they were called, under the Law; which, therefore, were not real expiatory sacrifices in themselves, but only types and shadows, appointed by God to foreshew, typify, and represent 'the sacrifice of the death of Christ,' then to come.

And in like manner the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is now ordained by Him, to set forth and commemorate the same sacrifice as now already offered up for the sins of mankind: which therefore is necessary to be continued to the end, as the typical sacrifices were from the beginning of the world.

For this purpose, therefore, was this Sacrament ordained, even 'for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ,' and, by consequence, 'of the benefits which we receive thereby.' Which are so many and so great, that they can neither be numbered nor weighed. For it is by it that we receive the pardon of our sins, atonement, and reconciliation to the Almighty Creator of the world, the gifts and graces of His Holy Spirit, and all the blessings that we ever had, or have, or can have, or are, or can be made capable of having, both in this world and the next. They were all merited for us 'by the sacrifice of the death of Christ,' and are bestowed upon us by means of that intercession which He continually maketh for us in Heaven, by virtue of the said sacrifice which He once offered up to God for us when He was upon earth.

The outward part or sign in this Sacrament is only bread and wine, which the Lord commanded to be received; that is, to be received into our bodies. For in the institution of this Sacrament, when He had blessed the bread, He said, "Take, eat:" when He had blessed the wine, He said, "Drink ye all of this." The one is to be eaten, the other drunk, and so both received into our bodies. And therefore bread and wine, thus received according to Christ's institution and commandment, is the outward part or sign in this Holy Sacrament. Matt. 26, 27.

But the inward part, or thing signified by that sign in the Lord's Supper, is, 'the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in

the Lord's Supper.' For when the Lord, at His Last Supper, had taken bread and blessed it, and given it to His Disciples, saying, "Take, eat;" He presently said, "This is My body, which was broken for you." Likewise, when He had taken the cup, and blessed it, and had given it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this;" He said, "For this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Whereby He plainly signified, that what He now gave them to eat and drink, He would have them look upon it, and receive it, not as common bread and wine, but as His body and blood; the one as broken, the other as shed, for their sins.

Which, therefore, are not in show and appearance, but verily and indeed, (according to the sense wherein the Lord, instituting the Sacrament, spoke those words,) taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper: by the faithful, even by all such, and only such, as believe the Gospel, and what our Lord said, and accordingly receive what He now

gives them with a true faith. Which being "the substance of things hoped for," as well as "the evidence of things not seen," it causeth that which our Lord said, and what they therefore hope for and receive, upon His word, to subsist really and effectually in them, to all intents and purposes to which the body and blood of Christ can possibly be communicated and received; according to that remarkable

saying of His Apostle to the same purpose, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the body of Christ?"

And doubtless the benefits that we receive by this Sacrament are suitable and proportionable to the expressions which our Lord used in the institution of it, when He said, 'This is My body,' and 'This is My blood.' Which being the highest expressions that could be used about it, we ought accordingly to have the highest opinion of it, and the greatest expectations that can be from it.

And so we well may: for whereas the Only-begotten Son of God, having assumed a human body, gave it to be broken, and the blood in it to be shed, and so offered it up as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind in general; in this Sacra-

ment He communicates and applies it particularly to His faithful people, saying to them, ‘This is My body which is broken for you, and this is My blood which is shed for you.’ So that all who rightly receive this Sacrament, do thereby actually partake of that great sacrifice which He offered, and of all the benefits which He thereby merited for mankind, in order to the sanctifying and saving of their souls.

For though the thing signified in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper be the body and blood of Christ, yet it is not received, as the sign is, into our bodies only, but into our souls. It is the inward and spiritual part in the Sacrament, and therefore hath respect only to the inward and spiritual part of him that receives it. As our Lord saith upon another occasion, “My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink John 6. 55. indeed ;” but He adds soon after, “The words that I spake ver. 63. unto you they are spirit and they are life.” So when He saith of that which He gives us in this Sacrament to eat and drink, ‘This is My body,’ and ‘This is My blood,’ He means it in a spiritual sense ; not as food for our bodies, but for our souls, which are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, the inward and spiritual grace, as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by bread and wine, the outward and visible sign in this Sacrament.

Our souls are strengthened by the body and blood of Christ, received by faith in this Sacrament, because by this means we have Christ Himself to dwell in our hearts by faith, as the Apostle speaks. For He Himself saith, “He Eph. 3. 17. that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in John 6. 56. Me, and I in him.” And seeing He that is the Fountain of all grace and strength dwelleth in us and we in Him, “His 2 Cor. 12. 9. grace is always sufficient for us, His strength is made perfect in our weakness ; and His power resteth continually upon us.” So that “we can do all things through Christ Which Phil. 4. 13. strengtheneth us.”

Many who have been accustomed to the frequent receiving of this Holy Sacrament, have thus, by their own experience, found it to be the means whereby to receive the grace of God, to strengthen their souls, and make them ‘steadfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the [1 Cor. 15. 58.] Lord.’ Whereas they who seldom receive it, as perhaps

twice or thrice a-year, they never knowing how to do it as they ought, for want of use, find themselves but little the better for it. But such as live in the wilful neglect of it (as too many do), starve their own souls, and have no ground to expect that Christ should save them, seeing they live in a known sin, even in the breach of that positive command which He laid upon His Disciples, "Do this in remembrance of Me;" which He would never have commanded, if it had not been necessary to be done in order to our being saved by Him.

Neither are our souls only strengthened, but likewise refreshed by this Holy Sacrament, as it is a pledge whereby we are assured of the grace of God, as well as a means whereby to receive it. For, seeing our Blessed Saviour Himself is pleased to tell us in this Sacrament, that His body was broken, and His blood shed for us, and for the remission of our sins, if we really believe His Word, and accordingly receive His said body and blood there offered to

1 Pet. 1. 8. us, with a quick and lively faith, we cannot but "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

For hereby we do not only receive, to our great comfort, the pardon of all our sins, signed with the blood of the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;" but, as our Church expresseth it in the prayer after the Communion, God Himself doth hereby 'assure us of His favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of His Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are heirs through hope of His everlasting Kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of His dear Son.' Which is certainly the greatest refreshment and comfort to our souls on this side Heaven; enough to make us run, not only with patience, but with pleasure, the race that is set before us.

From hence we may see, that as in the Sacrament of Baptism, we being born again of water and of the spirit, are quickened with a new and spiritual life: so in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, this new and spiritual life is supported and nourished by the body and blood of Christ; as our natural life is by meat and drink. And therefore, as

we eat and drink something or other every day to keep up our bodies in life and health, so we must take all opportunities that we can get of feeding upon this spiritual food, the bread and water of life, to keep our souls in health and strength as to their spiritual state; and must look upon ourselves as bound by our own interest, as well as duty, to do it as often as we can: this being the best means that we can ever use, whereby not only to live, but to “grow in ^{2 Pet. 3. 18.} grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to Him be glory now and for ever.”

QUESTIONS.

To what end did our Lord ordain the Sacrament of His Last Supper?

What is commemorated in it?

Was His death a proper sacrifice?

What are the benefits that we receive thereby?

What is the ‘outward part’ in this Sacrament?

How is that to be received?

What is the ‘inward part,’ or ‘thing signified?’

Are the body and blood of Christ received in the Lord’s Supper?

By whom are they received?

How are they received by them?

What do they partake of who faithfully receive them?

What part of us is ‘strengthened’ and ‘refreshed’ by them?

How are our souls thereby ‘strengthened?’

How are they ‘refreshed’ by the body and blood of Christ?

How often ought we to receive the Lord’s Supper?

Q. What is required of them who come to the Lord’s Supper?

A. To examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God’s mercies through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death, and be in charity with all men.

ALTHOUGH Our Lord used such expressions and terms in

the institution of the Sacrament of His Last Supper, as, if duly considered, would deter all people from approaching to it without reverence and godly fear; yet, nevertheless, there were some at first, especially at Corinth, who not rightly understanding, or else not duly considering it, ventured to come to it as to an ordinary meal; and to eat and drink the body and blood of Christ like common meat and drink. Which St. Paul hearing of, he rebuked them sharply for it, telling them in plain terms, that "this was not to eat the Lord's Supper." But looking upon it as proceeding chiefly from their ignorance of the institution, he acquaints them particularly with all the circumstances of it, as he had received it from the Lord Himself, and likewise with the great end and design of it, even to "shew forth the Lord's death till He come."

And then, to convince them of their former error, and to make them more careful for the future to avoid it, he adds, "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." As if he [had] said, 'Seeing this which I have now declared, is the nature and the end of this holy institution; therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, as you have hitherto done, shall be guilty of a great sin, in profaning the body and blood of the Lord.' And that they might better understand his meaning, he repeats the same thing again in other and plainer words, saying in the next verse but one, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (or judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

He doth not say, he that being unworthy (for so all men are) shall, notwithstanding, presume to eat this bread and drink this cup: but, he that doeth it unworthily, in an unworthy, irreverent, and unseemly manner, not becoming so holy an institution, as the Corinthians he speaks of did it; such a one eateth and drinketh not the body and blood of Christ, but damnation (or rather, as the word signifies, judgment) to himself; at least some temporal judgment, as he explains it in the next verse, saying, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

1 Cor. 11.
20-22.

ver. 23-25.

ver. 26.

ver. 27.

ver. 29.

ver. 30.

But to shew more fully what kind of unworthy receiving he here means, having said, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself;" he adds, "not discerning the Lord's body:" that is, not duly considering that it is the Lord's body, and therefore making no difference between that and common food; but eating this bread and drinking this cup after the same manner as they do their ordinary meat and drink. This is the sin which the Apostle here reproves and corrects, and labours for the future to prevent.

For which purpose he lays down this general rule to be observed by all that come, as all Christians ought to do, to the Lord's Supper: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." 1Cor. 11. 28. He only saith in general, "Let a man examine himself;" without telling us particularly what he should examine himself about, supposing that to appear sufficiently from the nature of the Sacrament itself, and the end of its institution, which he had now declared to them. Howsoever, from these words of the Apostle, many of late years have taken occasion to write whole books—some, large volumes—concerning the preparation required to the due receiving of the Lord's Supper. But all that hath been, or need, or can be said to any purpose about it, is here delivered and taught by our Church in few words, even, that they who come to the Lord's Supper are required 'to examine themselves about their repentance, their faith, and their charity.'

They must first examine themselves, 'whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life.' For unless they be sensible of, and truly penitent for, their former sins, they cannot have that respect and value for the body and blood of Christ, that was broken and shed for them, which is necessary to their due, reverent, and worthy receiving of them, when offered in this Holy Sacrament. Neither are they qualified for that pardon or remission which is there offered to them: for that being promised only to the penitent, none else are capable of it, and therefore cannot possibly receive it in that Sacrament.

Neither is it sufficient that they be grieved and troubled for their former sins; but they must 'repent them truly'

of them, so as 'steadfastly to purpose' and resolve, by the grace of God, 'to lead' for the future 'a new life:' for otherwise it is no true repentance. And besides, our souls are here strengthened and refreshed only as to their 'new and spiritual life,' as we have shewn already. And therefore they who do not lead such a 'new and spiritual life,' or at least do not 'steadfastly purpose' to do so, having no subject-matter for the body and blood of Christ to work upon, cannot receive it 'worthily,' for they cannot receive it to any purpose or effect.

Wherefore they who come to the Lord's Supper must search very diligently into their hearts and lives, and impartially examine themselves, and consider whether they have not hitherto lived in some known sin, or in the neglect of some known duty: and if they have, they must resolve, by God's assistance, to do so no longer; but to live for the future a truly pious and good life, as becometh the Gospel of Christ. And if they have done any wrong to any man, they must make him restitution, and all the satisfaction that they are able, as ever they desire to be worthy communicants in those holy mysteries, or to receive any benefit or comfort from them. In short, they must seriously consider wherein they have broken that solemn vow which they made to God in the Sacrament of Baptism; and whensoever they come to that of the Lord's Supper, they must renew and ratify the said vow, and resolve in good earnest to keep it in all points more exactly for the future.

Having thus examined their repentance, they must, in the next place, examine whether they have 'a lively faith in God's mercies through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death.' For without faith, as hath been shewn, they cannot receive the body and blood of Christ at all, and therefore not worthily. Without faith, also, they cannot rightly discern the body and blood of Christ from the bread and wine, and therefore must needs eat that bread and drink that cup of the Lord unworthily.

Now this faith necessarily supposeth our knowledge of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, the nature of this holy institution, and likewise the mercies which God hath promised in Jesus Christ, upon which it must be in this

case particularly exercised, 'with a thankful remembrance of that death' by which He merited, and upon the sole account whereof God hath promised, the said mercies to us.

So that when upon examination we find that we 'truly repent of our former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life,' we must come to the Lord's Supper with a 'lively faith,' firmly believing, that as really as we there eat and drink the outward elements of bread and wine, we do at the same time receive the full pardon of all our sins, by means of the body and blood of Christ, then and there communicated to us as broken and shed for us: and not only the pardon of our former sins, 'of God's infinite mercy in Christ,' but likewise grace and strength to perform our holy purposes and resolutions, so as to live for the future in newness of life. He that comes to the Lord's table with such a well-grounded faith, can never return without the blessings he came for, but will find his soul more strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ his Saviour, than any can imagine but he that feels it.

Wherefore, it being requisite that no man should come to the Lord's Supper but with such a full trust and confidence in God's mercies through Christ; if any man, by looking carefully into his heart, finds his conscience touched with so quick a sense of his former sins, that he knows not what to do, nor can satisfy his own mind, so as to be able to come to the Holy Communion with a lively faith and quiet conscience, 'he should then go to some discreet and able minister of God's Word, and open his grief, that by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of his conscience, and avoiding all scruples and doubtfulness.' As our Church directeth in the exhortation, when the minister giveth warning of the celebration of the Holy Communion.

The last thing which they who come to the Lord's Supper must examine themselves about is, whether 'they be in charity with all men: so as not to bear any grudge, malice, or hatred, against any person whatsoever.' For the Lord Himself having said, "If ye forgive not men their Matt. 6. 15.

trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," unless we forgive all the wrongs or injuries that other men have done us, we cannot go to this Sacrament with any true faith and trust in God's mercies for the pardon of our sins: for He hath told us beforehand that He will not pardon them. "Therefore," saith He, "if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Whereby He hath plainly given us to understand, that He will not accept of the offering that we make, nor of any thing we do at His Own table, except we 'be in charity with all men.'

Matt. 5. 23,
24.

And therefore, where there hath been any hatred, malice, or variance betwixt parties, they must of necessity first be reconciled to one another, before they can be reconciled to God, so as truly to partake of the body and blood of Christ for the pardon of their sins. But if one of the parties hath a mind to be reconciled, and the other not, the Church hath given directions what is to be done in that case in the rubric before the Communion.

He who, upon due examination, finds that he thus 'truly repenteth of his former sins, hath a lively faith in God's mercies through Christ, and is in charity with all men,' may well come to the Lord's Supper, without fear of eating that bread and drinking that cup of the Lord unworthily. For coming with a deep sense of his former sins upon his mind, he cannot but carry himself there with all humility, reverence and godly fear, that is due unto and becoming those holy mysteries: coming with a quick and lively faith, he must needs 'discern the Lord's body:' and coming likewise with a true Christian charity, he is every way qualified to receive the body and blood of Christ and to partake of the great benefits and blessings which are offered and exhibited to the faithful in the Lord's Supper.

[1 Cor. 11.
29.]

And if he finds, moreover, that he doth not only act these Christian graces at present, but hath exercised himself so long in them that they are now become habitual to him, then he will not always need so much actual preparation; but being thus always habitually disposed for it, he may, to

his unspeakable comfort, receive the blessed body and blood of his Saviour, whensoever it is administered, though it be every Lord's Day in the year, as it was in the primitive times, or every day in the week, as it was some time in the days of the Apostles, and may be so still, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England.

QUESTIONS.

What is meant by eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord unworthily?

What is required in general to the due receiving the Lord's Supper?

What are the particular things that men must examine themselves about?

Why must they examine whether they repent?

Why must they resolve to lead a new life?

How must they do that?

What need is there of examining their faith?

How must they exercise their faith in the Lord's Supper?

What must they do who are troubled with scruples and doubtings?

Why must they examine their charity?

What is here meant by 'charity'?

What must they do who are at variance?

Can they who truly repent, believe, and are in charity with all men, eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily?

How often may they come to the Lord's Supper in whom these graces are habitual?

POSTSCRIPT.

AFTER this short exposition of the Catechism was drawn up, looking it over again, I saw it expedient to add something here concerning it; for some, I believe, will be apt to think it too short: and it might, I confess, have been made much longer, and perhaps with more ease; but I confined myself to this narrow compass on purpose that I might not have

room to bring in any thing but what I thought necessary, and that the whole might be sooner comprehended. There are necessary things enough for people to learn without being troubled with things unnecessary. If here be all that they need to know of what they ought to believe and do as Christians, it is enough: more would but confound them, especially the younger and weaker sort, for which this is chiefly designed.

For whose sake also I have added the questions at the end of each discourse, such as may be put to those who are catechised, whereby to know whether they fully understand it. For if they do, they may readily return an answer to such questions out of what was there treated of, or out of some expressions used in treating of it. And if they stick at any thing, the Catechist may help them out, by varying the words and phrases, till he light upon such as they can best apprehend; and by shewing them how to resolve such (if there be any such) questions, to which they cannot find a direct answer: and if there be occasion, he may ask them any other questions, and likewise talk familiarly to them upon these or such other plain catechetical heads, without using any premeditated or set discourse, till he find that they understand all that is necessary for them to know, in that part of the Catechism which he instructs them in.

But I am very sensible, that although this or any other way of catechising to good purpose, may seem easy in the theory, it will be difficult to bring it every where into practice. For there are several parishes in the country where there are few or none of the parishioners that can read or say the Catechism themselves, much less that will teach others to read or say it. And what can a Minister do in that case? Is he bound to teach children or others to read? That is no part of the ministerial office; neither is there any necessity of it. In the first ages of the Church, there were few that could read, yet many were so well instructed in the faith of Christ, that they cheerfully suffered martyrdom for it. For being taught only necessary things, such as those few contained in our Church Catechism, they soon learned them so as to be deeply affected with them, and retain them in their hearts as well as heads; but they were generally

people of riper years. To make people understand the Catechism, who cannot read nor were taught it before, will require more time and patience; but it may be done: and the law requires that they be instructed and examined every Lord's Day in some part of the Catechism, without taking notice whether they can read, or had learned any thing of it before; and commandeth all parents, masters, and dames, to cause their children, servants, and apprentices (which have not learned their Catechism), to come and be ordered by the Curate till they can say all that is appointed for them to learn. All that are concerned, would do well to consider how this law, which tends so much to the good of those which are committed to their charge, may be best observed, and the end of it attained.

But there are other parishes, both about London and in the country, so very large and populous, that it is morally impossible for their respective Ministers to instruct all the children and ignorant persons that are in them. This seems to be foreseen in making the law: for it is there provided, that the Curate of every parish shall, every Lord's Day, instruct and examine so many of the children of the parish as he shall think convenient; and therefore he satisfies the law, who instructs some at one time, and some at another, so many as he conveniently can. But by this means the Curate in some parishes can scarce go through all in a whole year; and so can instruct none so fully as they ought to be instructed, unless he always takes the same; and then all the other will be neglected, and suffered to continue in their ignorance.

Neither do I see how this can be prevented in such great parishes any other way than by erecting catechetical schools, such as were usual in the primitive times, and contributed very much to the propagation of the Gospel. There was such a school at Alexandria, so ancient that it was thought to be begun by St. Mark the Evangelist; of which the two famous men, Pantænus and Clemens Alexandrinus, were successively masters. Origen also taught in the same school, and afterwards in such another at Cæsarea; and so did St. Cyril at Jerusalem, who was afterwards Bishop of the place; whose expositions of the principles of our Holy Religion,

[St. Jerom.
de Script.
Eccles. tom.
i. p. 376.
Euseb. Hist.
Eccles. v. 10;
vi. 6; 3;
30.]

which he made, as it is supposed, when he was only a deacon and catechist, are still extant, and highly esteemed, as they deserve.

And indeed this seems to have been a great part of the Deacons' office in those days. They were not only to take care of the poor, but to instruct the ignorant, or at least assist the Priests in doing it. And so it is or ought to be at this day among us, by the orders and constitutions of our Church, which in this, as in all other particulars, keeps close to the pattern of the Primitive and Apostolical. As appears from the form of ordaining a Deacon: for there the Bishop tells him who is to be ordained, that it appertains to the office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, among other things, 'to instruct the youth in the Catechism.' And he then solemnly promiseth that he will do so, 'by the help of God.' Whereby the Church layeth as great an obligation as can be well made, upon every one that is so ordained, to instruct the youth of the parish where he is to serve. And none can be admitted to the office, unless he have a title to some place where he may serve God and the Church in the execution of it.

Now if this was duly observed, it would conduce very much to the furtherance of this great work: for Deacons being obliged by the law to continue one whole year at least in that, before they are advanced to the higher order; if they all catechised the youth of the places where they serve all that time, the youth of such places would, at least for that time, be taken care of: and they themselves by teaching others would learn more, and be better fitted for the Priesthood, than by any other studies which they can follow in the meanwhile. And if none could be ordained Priests without letters testimonial, that they have faithfully executed this, as well as the other parts of the Deacon's office, it would make them more diligent and careful to perform what they promised at their ordination.

This, therefore, being an office which Deacons, as well as those in higher orders, may and ought to execute; and there being so many Deacons every year ordained in our Church out of them, together with those who are already admitted to the Priesthood, and are out of place (of which

[Bingham,
lib. ii. 20.
15.]

[Can. 33.]

there are too many), all the great parishes may be supplied with as many as are needful to the instructing of all the children and ignorant people in them, so as that the incumbents may have no more to do in this business than what they may easily compass. For they being all before instructed in one or more private schools, according to the extent of the parish, the Minister upon the Lord's Day need only examine in the Church as many as he thinks convenient at one time, to see whether they be fully and rightly instructed, and at another time as many more, and so by degrees go through the whole parish, and then begin again with those which he first examined: for by this means there will not be that necessity of examining the same persons publicly every Lord's Day: for they all continuing to be instructed in the schools, they will not lose what they have learned, as they otherwise would, but rather learn more than perhaps they could at Church. And if they be at Church too, as they ought to be, while the other are instructed and examined, they may receive the same benefit there, as if they themselves also were so.

This I the rather observe here, lest any should think that these private catechetical schools might supersede the Minister's duty in catechising publicly in the Church. For this is what the law requires, and the private instructions are only in order to the having so good a law better observed. And besides, as the Minister to whom the care of the youth is committed, must have an eye to the private schools, to see whether they be rightly instructed there; so it is requisite that he should instruct and examine them in public, that his parishioners likewise may be satisfied as well as he that they are so, and may be thereby also put in mind of many things which otherwise they might not think of.

And I hope there is never a Pastor in the Church that will think this below him, upon which depends the safety of so great a part of his flock as the lambs are, which he is expressly also commanded to feed as well as the sheep, and that too in the first place. I am sure the great Apostle did not think so when he solemnly professed, that although he spake with tongues more than all those he wrote to, yet in the Church he had rather speak five words with his under-

John 21. 15-17.

1 Cor. 14.
18, 19.

standing, that he might catechise others also, (so it is in the original,) than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

But the main difficulty will be in getting such schools for the children and servants of the rich, as well as poor (for whom there are charity-schools already in some places), set up in all parishes that have occasion for them, besides the grammar and other schools, if there be any, where the masters ought to instruct their scholars in the Church Catechism, as well as in any other science, art, or language. In many such parishes the maintenance of the Minister is so small, that it cannot be expected that he should do it himself: where it is otherwise, I doubt not but that he who is intrusted with the care of all the souls in the parish will do what he can towards it, as many do already. But as the case now stands with us, I do not see how it can be universally practised, as it ought to be, without the liberal contribution of pious and well-disposed Christians.

But, praised be God for it, we have still some among us, who, out of a deep sense of their duty, and pure zeal for the honour of Almighty God, are as forward and free to any pious and good work, as if they could merit by it: and such can never express their piety and charity both together any other way better, if so well as this, which hath an immediate tendency both to the glory of the Most High God, our Maker and Most Merciful Redeemer, and likewise to the Salvation of so many thousand souls, as well as to the benefit of the Church and kingdom in which they live; and that too not only for the present, but for all future ages.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPON

RELIGION,

DIGESTED INTO

TWELVE ARTICLES,

WITH

PRACTICAL RESOLUTIONS FORMED THEREUPON.

PART I.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS

ON

RELIGION,

&c. &c.

WHEN, in my serious thoughts and more retired meditations, I am got into the closet of my heart, and there begin to look within myself, and consider what I am, I presently find myself to be a reasonable creature; for was I not so, it would be impossible for me thus to reason and reflect. But am I a reasonable creature? Why then I am sure, within this veil of flesh there dwells a soul, and that of a higher nature than either plants or brutes are endowed with; for they have souls indeed, but yet they know it not; and that because their souls or material forms (as the philosophers term them) are not any thing really and essentially distinct from the very matter of their bodies, which being not capable of a reflective act, though they are they know it not, and though they act they know it not; it being not possible for them to look within themselves, or to reflect upon their own existences and actions. But it is not so with me; I not only know I have a soul, but that I have such a soul which can consider of itself, and deliberate of every particular action that issues from it. Nay, I can consider that I am now considering of my own actions, and can reflect upon myself reflecting; insomuch, that had I nothing else to do, I could spin out one reflection upon another to infinity. And, indeed, was there never another argument in the world to convince me of the spiritual nature of my soul, this alone would be sufficient to wrest

the belief and confession of it from me: for, what below a spirit can thus reflect upon itself? or, what below a spirit can put forth itself into such actions, as I find I can exercise myself in? My soul can, in a moment, mount from earth to Heaven, fly from pole to pole, and view all the courses and motions of the celestial bodies, the sun, moon, and stars; and then, the next moment, returning to myself again, I can consider where I have been, what glorious objects have been presented to my view, and wonder at the nimbleness and activity of my soul, that can run over so many millions of miles, and finish so great a work in so small a space of time. And are suchlike acts as these the effects of drossy earth, or impenetrable matter? Can any thing below a spirit raise itself so much beyond the reach of material actions?

But stay a little; what is this soul of mine, that I am now speaking of, that it is so nimble in its actions, and so spiritual in its nature? Why, it is that which actuates and informs the several organs and members of my body, and enables me not only to perform the natural actions of life and sense, but likewise to understand, consult, argue, and conclude, to will and nill, hope and despair, desire and abhor, joy and grieve, love and hate, to be angry now, and again appeased. It is that by which, at this very time, my head is inditing, my hand is writing, and my heart resolving what to believe and how to practise. In a word, my soul is myself; and therefore when I speak of my soul, I speak of no other person but myself. Not as if I totally excluded this earthly substance of my body from being a part of myself; I know it is. But I think it most proper and reasonable to denominate myself from my better part: for, alas! take away my soul, and my body falls, in course, into its primitive corruption, and moulders into the dust from whence it was first taken: "All flesh is grass," says the prophet, "and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." And this is no metaphorical expression, but a real truth; for what is that which I feed upon, but merely grass, digested into corn, flesh, and the like, which, by a second digestion, is transfused and converted into the substance of my body. And hence it is, that my body is but

[Isa. 40. 6.] whence it was first taken: "All flesh is grass," says the prophet, "and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field." And this is no metaphorical expression, but a real truth; for what is that which I feed upon, but merely grass, digested into corn, flesh, and the like, which, by a second digestion, is transfused and converted into the substance of my body. And hence it is, that my body is but

[1 Pet. 1.
24.]

like the grass, or flower of the field, fading, transient, and momentary, to-day flourishing in all its glory, to-morrow cut down, dried up, and withered. But now, how far is this below the spiritual and incorruptible nature of my immortal soul, which subsists of itself, and can never be dissolved, being not compounded of any earthly or elementary matter, (as the body is,) but is a pure spiritual substance, infused into me by God, to Whom, after a short abode in the body, it is to return, and to live and continue for ever, either in a state of happiness or misery in another life. [Ps. 90. 6.]

But must it so indeed? How much then does it concern me seriously to bethink myself where I had best to lead this everlasting life — in the heavenly mansions of eternal glory, or else in the dreadful dungeon of infernal misery? But betwixt these (as there is no medium, so) there is no comparison, and therefore I shall not put it to the question, which place to choose to live in; but, without giving the other that honour to stand in competition with it, I, this morning, with the leave of the Most High God, do choose the land of Canaan, the Kingdom of Heaven, to be the lot of mine inheritance, the only seat of bliss and glory for my soul to rest and dwell in to all eternity. But Heaven, they say, is a place hard to come at; yea, the King of that glorious place hath told me, that “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life, and that there be but few that find it,” yea, and that “many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” What, therefore, must I do? Why, I must either resolve to make it my whole business to get to Heaven, or else I must never hope or expect to come thither. Without any further dispute, therefore, about it, I resolve at this time, in the presence of Almighty God, that from this day forward, I will make it my whole business, here upon earth, to look after my happiness in Heaven, and to walk circumspectly in those blessed paths that God hath appointed all to walk in that ever expect to come to Him. Matt. 7. 14. Luke 13. 24.

Now, though there be but one way, and that a narrow one too, that leads to Heaven, yet there are two things requisite to all those that walk in it, and they are “faith” and “obedience,” to believe and to live aright. So that it

as much behoves me to have my faith rightly confirmed in the fundamentals of religion, as to have my obedience exactly conformed to the laws of God. And these two duties are so inseparably united, that the former cannot well be supposed without the latter; for I cannot obey what God hath commanded me, unless I first believe what He hath taught me. And they are both equally difficult as they are necessary: indeed, of the two, I think it is harder to lay the sure foundation of faith, than to build the superstructure of obedience upon it; for it seems next to impossible, for one that believes every truth, not to obey every command that is written in the Word of God. But it is not so easy a thing as it is commonly thought, to believe the Word of God, and to be firmly established in the necessary points of religion, especially in these wicked times wherein we live; in which there are so many pernicious errors and damnable heresies crept into the articles of some men's faith, as do not only shock the foundation of the Church of Christ, but strike at the root of all religion. The first thing, therefore, that, by the grace of God, I am resolved to do, in reference to my everlasting estate, is to see to my faith, that it be both rightly placed, and firmly fixed, that I may not be

[Eph. 4. 14.] as a "wave tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive;" but that I may be thoroughly settled in my faith and judgment concerning those things, the knowledge of and assent unto which is absolutely necessary to my future happiness. Let, therefore, what times soever come upon me, let what temptations soever be thrown before me, I am resolved, by the grace of God, steadfastly to believe as followeth.

ARTICLE I.

I believe there is One God, the Being of all beings.

THE other articles of my faith I think to be true because they are so; this is true, because I think it so: for if there was no God, and so this article not true, I could not be, and

so not think it true. But in that I think, I am sure I am; and in that I am, I am sure there is a God; for if there was no God, how came I to be? How came I hither? Who gave me my being? Myself? That could not be; for before I had a being, I was nothing, and therefore could do nothing, much less make myself a being. Did my parents give me my being? Alas! they knew not that I should be before I was; and therefore, certainly, could not give me my being when I was not. As to my soul (which I call myself) it is plain they could not give me that, because it is a being of a spiritual nature, quite distinct from matter, as my own experience tells me, and therefore could not be the product of any natural or material agent: for that a bodily substance should give being to a spiritual one implies contradiction. And if it could neither make itself, nor take its rise from any earthly or secondary cause, I may certainly conclude, from my own reason, as well as from Divine revelation, that it must be infused by God, though I am not able to determine either when or how it was done? As to my body, indeed, I must own it was derived from my parents, who were immediately concerned in bringing the materials of it together: but then, who made up these coarse materials into the form or figure of a body? Was this the effect of natural generation? But how came my parents by this generative power? Did they derive it by succession from our first parents in Paradise? Be it so. But whence came they? Did they spring out of the earth? No; what then? Were they made by chance? This could not be; for as chance seldom or never produces any one effect that is regular and uniform, so it cannot be supposed, that a being of such admirable beauty, symmetry, and proportion, and such a nice contexture of parts as the body of man is, should ever be jumbled together by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, which nothing but the chimeras of Epicurus could ever reduce into a regular form and composition.

And the like may be said of all other created beings in the world. For there is no natural cause can give being to any thing, unless it has that being it gives in itself; for it is a received maxim in philosophy, that 'nothing can give what it has not.' And so, however the bodies of men, or

brutes, or plants, may now in the ordinary course of nature be produced by generation, yet there must needs be some one Supreme Almighty Being in the world, that has the Being of all other beings in itself; Who first created these several species, and endued them with this generative power to propagate their kind. And this Supreme Being is that which we call God. Hence it is, that there is not a leaf, no, not a line in this great book of the creation, wherein we may not clearly read the existence and perfections of the Great and Glorious Creator, and that even by the glimmering light of nature. For who is it that bedecked yonder stately canopy of heaven with those glistering spangles the stars? Who is it that commands the sun to run his course, and the moon to ride her circuit so constantly about the world? Who is it that formed me so curiously in my mother's womb? Who is it that gives my stomach power to digest such variety of meats into chyle, and my heart or liver to turn them all to blood; and thence to send each particle to its proper place, and all to keep up this crazy carcass? Doubtless these, and suchlike things, however ordinary or natural they may appear to us at present, are in themselves very great and wonderful effects, that must at first be produced by some infinitely powerful and supernatural agent, the High and Mighty God, Who is not only the Chiefest of beings, but the Being of all beings whatsoever. I say, the Being of all beings, because whatsoever excellency or perfection is in any other thing, is eminently, yea, infinitely comprehended in Him; so that He is not only the creatures' perfection in the concrete, but in the abstract too; He is not only All-wise, All-good, All-mighty, &c. but He is All-wisdom, All-goodness, All-might, All-mercy, All-justice, All-glory, &c. And as He is the Ocean and Abyss of all these perfections in Himself, so is He the Fountain of them all to us. Insomuch that we have nothing, not so much as the least moment of life, but what is communicated to us from this Ever-living God. And not only what we poor sinful worms are, or have, but even whatsoever those nobler creatures the Angels have, it is but a beam darted from this Sun, it is but a stream flowing from this overflowing Fountain. Lift up thine eyes, therefore, O my soul, and fix them a little

upon this Glorious Object! How glorious, how transcendently glorious must He needs be, Who is the Being of all beings, the Perfection of all perfections, the very Glory of all glories, the Eternal God! He is the Glory of love and goodness, Who is good, and doeth good continually unto me, though I be evil, and do evil continually against Him. He is the Glory of wisdom and knowledge, unto Whom all the secret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my soul, are exactly known and manifest. Never did a thought lurk so secretly in my heart, but that His all-seeing eye could espy it out: even at this time He knows what I am now thinking of, and what I am doing as well as myself. And, indeed, well may He know what I think, and speak, and do, when I can neither think, nor speak, nor do any thing, unless Himself be pleased to give me strength to do it. He is the glory of might and power, Who did but speak the word, and there presently went out that commanding power from Him, by which this stately fabric of the world was formed and fashioned. And as He created all things by the word of His power, so I believe He preserves and governs all things by the power of the same word: yea, so great is His power and sovereignty, that He can as easily frown my soul from my body into Hell, or nothing, as I can throw this book out of my hand to the ground: nay, he need not throw me into nothing, but, as if I should let go my hold, the book would presently fall; so, should God but take away His supporting hand from under me, I should, of myself, immediately fall down to nothing. This, therefore, is that God Whom I believe to be the Being of all beings, and so the Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Disposer of all things in the world.

ARTICLE II.

I believe that whatsoever the Most High God would have me to believe or do, in order to His glory and my happiness, He hath revealed to me in His Holy Scriptures.

UPON the same account that I believe there is a God, I believe likewise that this God is to be worshipped; the

same light that discovers the one, discovering the other too. And therefore it is, that as there is no nation or people in the world but acknowledge some Deity; so there is none but worship that Deity which they acknowledge; yea, though it be but a stick or a stone, yet if they fancy any thing of divinity in it, they presently perform worship and homage to it. Nay, that God is to be worshipped, is a truth more generally acknowledged than that there is a God. No nation, I confess, ever denied the latter, but no particular person ever denied the former: so that the very persons, who, through diabolical delusions, and their own prevalent corruptions, have suspected the existence of a Deity, could not but acknowledge that He was to be worshipped if He did exist; worship being that which is contained in the very notion of a Deity; which is, that He is the Being of all beings, upon Whom all other things or beings so depend, and unto Whom they are beholden both for their essence and subsistence. And if there be such a Being that is the spring and fountain of all other beings, it is necessary that all other should reverence and worship Him, without Whom they could not subsist. And therefore it is, that men are generally more superstitious in their worshipping than they ought to be, rather than deny that worship to Him which they ought to give.

That, therefore, there is a God, and that this God is to be worshipped, I do not doubt; but the great question is, Who is this God Whom I ought to worship? and, what is that worship which I ought to perform unto Him? The former I have resolved upon in the foregoing article, as the light of reason and my natural conscience suggested to me; the latter I am resolved to search out in this, viz. which of all the several kinds of worship, that men perform to the Deity, and the several religions that men profess in the world, had I best make choice of to profess and adhere to? The general inclinations which are naturally implanted in my soul to some religion, it is impossible for me to shift off; but there being such a multiplicity of religions in the world, I desire now seriously to consider with myself which of them all to restrain these my general inclinations to. And the reason of this my inquiry is not, that I am in the least

dissatisfied with that religion I have already embraced, but because it is natural for all men to have an overbearing opinion and esteem for that particular religion they are born and bred up in: that, therefore, I may not seem biassed by the prejudice of education, I am resolved to prove and examine them all, that I may see and hold fast to that which is best. For though I do not in the least question but that I shall, upon inquiry, find the Christian religion to be the only true religion in the world, yet I cannot say it is, unless I find it upon good grounds to be so indeed. For to profess myself a Christian, and believe that Christians are only in the right, because my forefathers were so, is no more than the Heathens and the Mahometans have to say for themselves. Indeed, there was never any religion so barbarous and diabolical, but it was preferred before all other religions whatsoever by them that did profess it, otherwise they would not have professed it. The Indians that worship the Devil would think it as strange doctrine to say, "that Christ is to be feared more than the Devil;" as such as believe in Christ think it is to say, "the Devil is to be preferred before Christ." So do the Mahometans call all that believe not in Mahomet, as well as Christians call those that believe not in Christ, infidels. "And why," say they, "may not you be mistaken as well as we? especially when there is, at the least, six to one against your Christian religion; all of which think they serve God aright, and expect happiness thereby as well as you." So that to be a Christian only upon the grounds of birth or education, is all one as if I was a Turk or a Heathen: for if I had been born amongst them, I should have had the same reason for their religion as now I have for my own: the premises are the same, though the conclusion be never so different. It is still upon the same grounds that I profess religion, though it be another religion which I profess upon these grounds: so that I can see but very little difference betwixt being a Turk by profession, and a Christian only by education; which commonly is the means and occasion, but ought by no means to be the ground, of any religion. And hence it is, that in my looking out for the truest religion, being conscious to myself how great an ascendant Christianity hath over me beyond the rest, as

being that religion whereinto I was born and baptized ; that which the supreme authority has enjoined, and my parents educated me in ; that which every one I meet withal highly approves of, and which I myself have, by a long-continued profession, made almost natural to me, I am resolved to be more jealous and suspicious of this religion than of the rest, and be sure not to entertain it any longer, without being convinced, by solid and substantial arguments, of the truth and certainty of it.

That, therefore, I may make diligent and impartial inquiry into all religions, and so be sure to find out the best, I shall, for a time, look upon myself as one not at all interested in any particular religion whatsoever, much less in the Christian religion ; but only as one who desires, in general, to serve and obey Him that made me in a right manner, and thereby to be made partaker of that happiness my nature is capable of. In order to this, it will be necessary to propose to myself some certain marks or characters, whereby I may be able to judge and make choice of the religion I intend to embrace ; and they are, in general, these two, viz.—

First, That is the best religion wherein God is worshipped and served most like Himself, *i. e.* most suitably and conformably to His nature and will. And,

Secondly, Since all men naturally desire and aspire after happiness, and our greatest happiness consists in the fruition of God, that is certainly the best religion which gives me the best and most comfortable assurances of being happy with God to all eternity.

To embrace a religion without these marks, would be worse than to have no religion at all ; for better it is to perform no worship to God, than such as is displeasing to Him ; to do Him no service, than such as will be ineffectual to make me happy, and not only frustrate my expectations of bliss, but make me for ever miserable.

The religion, then, that I am to look after, must be such a one wherein I may be sure to please God, and to be made happy with Him ; and by consequence such a one wherein all the cause of His displeasure, and my misery, may be removed ; and that is sin : for sin being infinitely opposite to

Him, as He is a Being of infinite purity and holiness, must certainly set me at the greatest distance from Him, and render me most odious in His sight; and whatsoever does so must make me as miserable as misery can make me. For as our holiness consisteth in likeness, so doth our happiness in nearness, to God: and if it be our happiness to be near unto Him, it must certainly be our misery to be at a distance from Him. In enjoying Him, we enjoy all things, He being and having all things in Himself; and so, in not enjoying Him, we are not only deprived of all that we can enjoy, but made liable to the punishments that are the consequence of it.

That there is no such thing in nature as virtue and vice, as good and evil, as grace and sin, is what I can by no means persuade myself to; for my conscience tells me that there is: and not only mine, but every one's that ever yet lived upon the face of the earth. All people, of whatsoever nation or language, still acknowledging sin to be sin, and that the displeasing the Deity which they worship, is indeed an evil that ought to be carefully avoided. And therefore the very Heathens did not only upbraid others with it, but likewise often checked themselves for it: and all men naturally desire to seem, though not to be, holy. But let others say what they will, I, for my own part, cannot but see sin in myself, by the very light of nature. For my reason tells me, that if God be God, He must be just and perfect; and if I be not so too, I am not like Him, and therefore must needs displease Him; it being impossible any thing should please Him, but what is like unto Him. And this difformity to the will and nature of God is that which we call sin, or which the word *sin*, in its proper notion, brings into my mind. And being thus conscious to myself, that I have sinned against my Maker, I may reasonably conclude, that as He is omniscient, and by consequence a witness of these my offences, so must He likewise be just in the punishment of them; for it cannot stand with His justice to put up with such offences, without laying suitable punishments upon the offender; and these punishments must be infinite and eternal. For wherein doth the nature of Divine justice consist, but in giving to sin its just punishments, as well as

to virtue its due rewards. Now, that the punishment of sin in this world is not so much as it deserves, nor by consequence as much as in justice ought to be laid upon it, to me is clear, in that every sin, being committed against an infinite God, deserves infinite punishment; whereas all the punishments we suffer in this world cannot be any more than finite, the world itself being no more than finite that we suffer them in.

Upon these grounds, therefore, it is, that I am fully satisfied in my conscience that I am a sinner; that it cannot stand with the justice nor the existence of God that made me, to pardon my sins without satisfaction made to His Divine justice for them; and yet, that unless they be pardoned, it is impossible for me to be happy here or hereafter. And therefore must I look after some religion wherein I may be sure my sins may be thus pardoned, and my soul made happy, wherein I may please God, and God may bless me. Which that I may be the better able to discover, I shall take a brief survey of all the religions I ever heard of, or believe to be in the world.

Now, though there be as many kinds of religions as nations, yea, almost as particular persons in the world, yet may they all be reduced to these four: the Paganish, Mahometan, Jewish, and Christian religion.

As to the first, it is indeed of a very large extent, and comprehends under it all such as neither acknowledge Mahomet to be a Prophet, nor expect a promised Messiah, nor believe in a crucified Jesus. And since it is the majority of numbers that usually carries the vogue, let me see whether the Paganish religion, being further extended and more generally professed than any, or indeed all the rest, be not the true religion wherein God is most rightly worshipped, and I may be the most certainly saved? And here, when I take a view of this religion, as it is dispersed through several parts of Asia, Africa, and America, I find them very devout in worshipping their deities, such as they are, and they have great numbers of them. Some worship the sun, others the moon and stars, others the earth and other elements, serpents, trees, and the like. And others, again, pay homage and adoration to images and statues, in the fashion of men

and women, hogs, horses, and other shapes; and some to the Devil himself, as in Pegu, &c. But now, to go no further, this seems to me, at first sight, to be a very strange and absurd sort of religion, or rather, it is quite the reverse of it: for the true notion we have of religion is the worshipping the true God in a true manner; and this is the worshipping false gods in a false manner. For I cannot entertain any other notion of God than as one Supreme Almighty Being, Who made and governs all things, and Who, as He is a Spirit, ought to be worshipped in a spiritual manner. And therefore, as the very supposing more deities than one implies a contradiction, so the paying Divine homage in a gross, carnal manner to material and corporeal beings, which are either the work of men's hands, or, at best, but creatures like ourselves, which can neither hear nor understand what we say to them, much less give us what we desire of them, is not religion, but idolatry and superstition, or rather madness and delusion. So that this religion, I see, if I should embrace it, would be so far from making me happy, that the more zealous I should be for it, the more miserable I should be by it. For He that made these things cannot but be very angry at me, if I should give that worship to them which is only due to Himself; and so the way whereby I expect my sins should be pardoned, they would be more increased; it being a sin against the very light of nature to prefer any thing before God, or to worship any thing in His stead: therefore, leaving these to their superstitious idolatries and diabolical delusions, I must go and seek for the true religion somewhere else.

[John 4.
24.]

The next religion that hath the most suffrages and votes on its side is the Mahometan religion, so called from one Mahomet, an Arabian, who, about a thousand years ago, by the assistance of one Sergius, a Nestorian monk, compiled a book in the Arabian tongue, which he called Alcoran, which he made the rule of his followers' faith and manners, pretending that it was sent from Heaven to him by the hand of the Angel Gabriel.

[Sale's Koran, cap. xvi. v. 103, note.]

This book I have perused, and must confess find many things in it agreeable to right reason; as, that there is but

[Sale's Koran, cap. cxii. v. 1, 2, &c.] one God, gracious and merciful, the Lord of the whole universe; that this God we are to resign ourselves wholly to; that all that obey Him shall be certainly rewarded, and all that disobey Him as certainly punished; and the like.

[Cap. vii. v. 39, 43, &c.] But yet I dare not venture my soul upon it, nor become one of the professors of it, because, as there are many things consonant, so are there many things dissonant to the natural light that is implanted in me; as, that God should swear by figs and olives, by Mount Sinai, as this book makes Him to do, in the chapter of the Figs; that Solomon should have an army composed of men and devils and birds; and that he should discourse with a bird which acquainted him with the affairs of the Queen of Sheba; and the like.

As to the argument whereby he would persuade us, that this book was sent from God, viz. "that there are no contradictions in it," I take it to be very false and frivolous; for, besides that there are many books compiled by men which have no contradictions in them, it is certain there are a great many plain contradictions in this book, which overthrow his supposition. Thus, in the chapter of the Table, he saith, that "All that believe in God, and the resurrection of the dead, and have done good works, shall be saved;" but, in the chapter of Gratification, he saith, "All that do not believe in the Alcoran shall be destroyed;" and so in the chapter of Hod. In like manner, he tells us again, in the chapter of the Table, that "the books of the Old and New Testament were sent from God," and at the same time supposes that the Alcoran was sent from Him too, which to me seems impossible. For my reason tells me, that God, Who is truth and wisdom itself, cannot be guilty of falsehood or contradiction. And if these books contradict one another, as it is evident they do in many instances, it is plain God could not be the Author of both; and, by consequence, if the Scripture be true, the Alcoran must of necessity be false. To instance but in one particular, the Alcoran says, in the chapter of Women, "God hath no Son;" the Scripture, in Matt. iii. 17, God said, of Jesus, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased;" and Heb. iv. 14, it expressly calls that Jesus the "Son of God;" and so in

many other things. Now, it is impossible that both these should be true, or by consequence that that should be true which says both are so. But if this were granted, there is still another objection against this religion, and that is, that the rewards therein promised will not avail to make me happy, though I should be partaker of them. For all the promises made to us in this Paradise are but mere sensible pleasures; as that we shall have all manner of herbs, and fruits, and drinks, and women with exceeding great and black eyes, as in the chapter of the Merciful, and of Judgment, and elsewhere; and such pleasures as these, though they may indeed affect my body, yet they cannot be the happiness of my soul. Indeed I know not how this book should promise any higher happiness than that of the body, because it shews no means of attaining to it; it shews no way how my sins may be pardoned, and so my soul made happy. It saith, I confess, that God is gracious and merciful, and therefore will pardon them; but my reason tells me, that as God is gracious and merciful, and therefore will pardon sin, so is He also just and righteous, and therefore must punish it; and how these two can stand together is not manifested in the Alcoran, and therefore I dare not trust my soul with it.

[Sale's Koran, cap. lv. v. 70, &c.]

Thus, upon diligent search, have I found the two religions that are most generally professed, to have little or nothing of religion in them. I shall, therefore, in the next place, take a view of that religion which hath the fewest followers, and that is the Jewish. A religion not established by any human laws, nor, indeed, generally professed in any nation, but only by a company of despicable people, scattered up and down the world; which, as the Prophet expresses it, “are become a proverb of reproach, and a by-word among all nations whither they are driven.” The principles of this religion are contained in a book written in the Hebrew tongue, which they call the תּוֹרָה Torah, or Law, composed of several precepts, promises, and threatenings; together with histories of things past, and prophecies of things to come. This book, they say, was written by men inspired by God Himself, and therefore they avouch it not

[Jer. 24. 9.]

to be of a human invention, but merely of Divine institution. This book, also, I have diligently read and examined into, and must ingenuously confess, that, at the very first glance, methought I read divinity in it, and could not but conclude, from the majesty of its style, the purity of its precepts, the harmony of its parts, the certainty of its promises, and the excellency of its rewards, that it could be derived from no other author but God Himself. It is here only that I find my Maker worshipped under the proper notion of a Deity, as He is יְהוָה *Jehovah*; and that in the right manner, for we are here commanded to “love and serve Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, our might, and mind,” which is indeed the perfection of all true worship whatsoever. And as God is here worshipped aright, so is the happiness which is here entailed upon this true worship the highest that it is possible a creature should be made capable of, being nothing less than the enjoyment of Him we worship, so as to have Him to be a God to us, and ourselves to be a people to Him.

Dent. 6. 5;
10. 12.

Jer. 31. 33.

But that which I look upon still as the surest character of the true religion, is its holding forth the way how I, being a sinner, can be invested with this happiness; or how God can shew His justice in punishing sin itself, and yet be so merciful as to pardon and remit it to me, and so receive me to His favour; which the religions I viewed before did not so much as pretend to, or offer at all at. And this is what this book of the Law does likewise discover to me, by shewing that God Almighty would not visit our sins upon ourselves, but upon another person; that he would appoint and ordain One to be our Sponsor or Mediator; Who, by His infinite merit, should bear and atone for our iniquities, and so shew His love and mercy in justifying and acquitting us from our sins, at the same time that He manifests His justice in inflicting the punishment of them upon this Person in our stead, a method so deep and mysterious, that if God Himself had not revealed it, I am confident no mortal man could ever have discovered or thought of it.

Neither are there any doubts and scruples concerning this great mystery, but what this book does clearly answer

and resolve, as will appear more plainly from a distinct consideration of the several objections that are urged against it.

As, 1st, That it does not seem agreeable either to reason or Scripture, that one man should bear the sins of another, because every man has enough to do to bear his own burden; and since sin is committed against an infinite God, and therefore deserves infinite punishment, how can any finite creature bear this infinite punishment, especially it being due to so many thousands of people as there are in the world?

But this book sufficiently unties this knot for me, by shewing me that it is not a mere man, but God Himself that would bear these my sins, even He whose name is יהוה צדקנוי, "The Lord our Righteousness," where the essential Name of the Most High God, which cannot possibly be given to any but to Him Who is the Being of all beings, is here given to Him Who should thus "bear my sins," and justify my person; whence David also calleth Him "Lord;" [Heb. 9. 28.] Ps. 110. 1. Isaiah calleth Him "the Mighty God;" yea, and the Lord Isa. 9. 6. of Hosts Himself, with His Own mouth, calls Him His "Fellow." Zech. 13. 7.

Obj. 2. But my reason tells me, God is a pure act, and therefore how can He suffer any punishments? or suppose He could, how can one nature satisfy for the offences of another? It was man that stood guilty, and how can it stand with the justice of God not to punish man for the sins he is guilty of?

To resolve this doubt, this Holy Book assures me, that this God should become man, expressly telling me, that as His Name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," so should He be born a "Child," and given as a "Son." And, therefore, at the same time that the Lord of Hosts calls Him His "Fellow," He calls Him a "Man" too: "Against the Man that is My Fellow, says the Lord of Hosts." Isa. 9. 6. Zech. 13. 7.

Obj. 3. But if He be born as other men are, He must needs be a sinner as other men be; for such as are born by natural generation, must necessarily be born also in natural corruption.

Isa. 7. 14. To remove this obstacle, this Holy Book tells me, that “ a virgin shall conceive and bear this Son, and His Name shall be Immanuel.” And so being begotten, but not by a sinful man, Himself shall be a Man, but not a sinful man : and so being God and Man, He is every way fit to mediate betwixt God and man, to reconcile God to me, and me to God, that my sins may be pardoned, God’s wrath appeased, and so my soul made happy in the enjoyment of Him.

But there is one thing more that keeps me from settling upon this religion, and that is the expiration of the time in which this Book promiseth this Person should come into the world ; for it is expressly said, that “ seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people, and upon Thy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and the prophecy, and to anoint the most holy :” from which “ anointing,” He is in the next verse called מָשִׁיחַ, Messiah, the Anointed, (under which name He is from hence expected by the Jews,) and the beginning of these seventy weeks is expressly said, to be “ at the going forth of the commandment to build and restore Jerusalem.” Now, if we understand these seventy weeks in the largest sense, for ver. 25. Lev. 25. 8. seventy weeks or “ sabbaths of years,” as it is expressed, the time of the Messiah’s coming must have been but four hundred and ninety years after the commandment for the building of the city : whereas, whether we understand it of the decree and command that Cyrus made, or that which 2Chron. 36. 22, 23 ; Ezra 1. 1-3. Darius made, or that Artaxerxes made ; I say, whichsoever of these decrees we understand this prophecy of, it is evident that it is above two thousand years since they were all made, and therefore the time of this person’s coming hath been expired above sixteen hundred years at least. So likewise doth this Book of the Law (as they call it) assure us Gen. 49. 10. that “ the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,” where the Jews themselves, Jonathan and Onkelos, expound the word שִׁלּוֹה Shiloh, by מָשִׁיחַ, Messiah, and so doth the Jerusalem Targum too. Now it is plain that there hath been neither sceptre nor lawgiver in Judah, nor any political government at all among the Jews, for above sixteen hundred years ;

which plainly shews, either that their prophecies and expectations of a Messiah are false, or that He came into the world so many ages since, as were here prefixed. So likewise it was expressly foretold in this Book, that “the glory of the second Temple should be greater than the glory of the former.” Now the Jews themselves acknowledge, that there were five of the principal things which were in the first wanting in the second Temple, viz.—1. The ark, with the Mercy-seat and Cherubim. 2. The *שְׁכִינָה*, Shechinah, or Divine Presence. 3. The Holy Prophetical Spirit. 4. The Urim and Thummim. 5. The heavenly fire: and from the want of these five things, they say the word *אֶפְרָיִם*, “I will be glorified,” wants an *ה* at the end, which, in numeration, denotes five. Yea, and, when the very foundation of the second Temple was laid, the old men that had seen the first wept, to see how far short it was likely to come of the former. To make up, therefore, the glory of the second Temple to be greater than the glory of the first, notwithstanding the want of so many glorious things, they must of necessity understand it of the coming of the Messiah into it, Who is called “the Desire of all Nations.” Whereas, the Jews themselves cannot but confess, that this Temple hath been demolished above sixteen hundred years; and therefore it is impossible for the Messiah to come into it, and so for its glory to be greater than the glory of the first Temple, and, by consequence, for the word which they profess to believe in to be true.

Indeed, the time of the Messiah’s coming was so expressly set down in these and the like places, that Elias, one of their great Rabbis, gathered from hence that the world should last six thousand years, two thousand without the Law, two thousand under the Law, and two thousand under the Messiah, which computation of the Messiah’s coming, after four thousand years from the beginning of the world, comes near the time of the Sceptre’s departing from Judah, and the end of Daniel’s seventy weeks; which shews, that this Rabbi was fully convinced that it was about that time that the Messiah should come. And therefore it was, likewise, that about sixteen hundred years ago the Jews did so generally expect His coming; and that so many did pretend to

[Basnage,
Hist. of
Jews, lib.
vi. cap. ix.
24. Trans.]

be the person, as Bar-Cozbah, who, about that time, venting himself to be the man, almost the whole nation unanimously concurred in following him; insomuch that, as the Jews report, there were no less than four hundred thousand, or, as others, five hundred thousand men slain, by Adrian the Emperor, in the city Bitter, all fighting in defence of this pretended Messiah. There were likewise many others that fancied themselves to be the man, and were esteemed so by some, till manifestly convinced of their error, as we may read in a book of theirs called *שִׁבְטֵי יְהוּדָה*. And, unto this day, many of them hold that He is already come; but that, by reason of their sins, He is not yet revealed to them.

Hence it is that my natural reason draws me into this dilemma, that either that book which the Jews receive as the word of God, is indeed not so; or else, that they do not rightly apply it: and so, that either their religion is a false religion, or else their profession of it is a false profession. And therefore I must go hence, and seek me some other religion to fix my soul upon: not as if my reason told me, that all the prophecies that I have mentioned here were false in themselves, but only that they appear so to this sort of professors; for, my own part, I cannot shake off my faith in this law, which they profess to believe in; especially now I have so seriously perused it, and so deliberately weighed and considered of it. Neither can I believe that ever any Mahometan or Indian that did, without prejudice, set himself to read it through, and to examine every particular by the light of unbiassed reason, could say it was ever hatched in a human brain; but that it is, indeed, of a Heavenly stamp and Divine authority. And therefore, though I am forced, by the strength of reason, to shake hands with this religion, yet the same reason will not suffer me to lay aside that law which they do profess, but only their profession of it. So that whatsoever religion I settle upon, my natural conscience still commands me to stick close to this Book of the Jewish Law, and to receive and entertain it as the Word of the Glorious Jehovah, the Being of all beings.

Well, there is but one religion more generally professed in the world that I am to search into, which if, upon good

grounds, I cannot fix upon, I shall be the most miserable of all creatures ; and that is the Christian religion, so named from Jesus Christ, whose doctrine, life, and death, are recorded by four several persons in a book which they call the Gospel : and this book appears to me to be of undoubted authority, as to the truth and certainty of those things that are therein recorded. For if they had been false, both the persons that wrote them, and He of Whom they wrote, had so many malicious enemies ready upon all occasions to accuse them, that they had long ago been condemned for lies and forgeries. But now these writings have been extant for above sixteen hundred years, and never so much as suspected, but, even by the worst of enemies, acknowledged to be a true relation of what passed in the world about that time ; my reason will not permit me to be their first accuser, but enjoins me to receive them under that notion, in which they have been brought down to me through so many generations, without any interruption whatsoever. For this general reception on all hands is a sufficient ground for me to build my faith upon as to the truth of the relation, though not a sufficient ground to believe every thing contained in the book to be the word of God Himself : for, in this particular, it is not the testimony of others that I am to build upon, but its own. I may read its verity in man's testimony, but its divinity only in its own doctrines.

This book, therefore, I have also diligently perused, and find it expressly asserts that Jesus Christ, Whose life and death it records, was indeed that Person Who was so long ago promised by God, and expected by the Jews : and that all the prophecies under the Old Law concerning that Messiah, God-man, were actually fulfilled in this Person ; which if, upon diligent search, I can find to be true, I shall presently subscribe both with hand and heart to this religion. It is a comfort to me that it acknowledgeth the Jewish Law to be sent from God ; for truly, if it did not, my conscience would scarce permit me to give any credit to it, being so fully convinced that that book is indeed of a higher extract than human invention, and of greater authority than human institution. And therefore it is that I cannot, I dare not believe, but that every particular prophecy contained in it,

either is, or shall be, certainly fulfilled, according to every circumstance of time and place mentioned therein ; and, by consequence, that this prophecy in particular concerning the Messiah's coming is already past, the time wherein it was foretold He should come being so long ago expired. So that I do not now doubt whether the Messiah be come or no, but whether this Jesus Christ, Whom this book of the Gospel speaks of, was indeed the person. And this I shall best find out by comparing the Christian's Gospel with the Jewish Law ; or the histories of Christ under the one, with the prophecies of the Messiah under the other ; still concluding, that if whatsoever was foretold concerning the Messiah was fulfilled in this Jesus Christ, then He was indeed the Messiah that was to come into the world. And to make this comparison the more exact, I shall run through the several circumstances that attended his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and shew how punctually the prophecies were fulfilled in every particular.

And, first, for the birth of the Messiah, the Law saith, He was to be "born of the seed of Abraham," and "David," and of "the stem of Jesse:" from whence He is frequently called by the Jews בֶּן־דָּוִד, "The Son of David:" the Gospel saith, "Jesus Christ was the Son of David, the son of Abraham." The Law, that He "was to be born of a virgin:" the Gospel, that "Mary, a virgin, brought forth this Jesus." The Law, that "He was to be born at Bethlehem Ephrata:" the Gospel, that this Jesus was born there. The Law says, that He was to be "brought out of Egypt:" the Gospel, that Jesus was called thence. The Law saith, that "one should go before the Messiah," and should "cry in the wilderness:" the Gospel, that John Baptist did so before Christ. The Law, that the Messiah should "preach the doctrine of Salvation in Galilee," who, sitting before in darkness, should see great light: the Gospel, that Jesus did so. The Law, that in the Messiah's days the "eyes of the blind should be opened," and the "ears of the deaf should be unstopped," and the "lame leap," and the "tongue of the dumb sing:" the Gospel, that it was so in the days of Jesus Christ. But for all these wonders and miracles, the Law saith, they "should hear,

but not understand ; and see, yet not perceive :” and the Gospel, that “ seeing they did not see, and hearing they did not hear, neither did they understand.” The Law, that He should be “ despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief :” the Gospel, that “ Jesus Christ had not where to lay His head ;” “ His soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ;” yea, He was in “ an agony,” and His “ sweat was as drops of blood,” so well was He acquainted with grief. The Law says, that He should “ ride into Jerusalem upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass :” and the Gospel, that “ Jesus Christ, as He was going to Jerusalem, having found an ass, sat thereon.” At which time the Law saith, the people should cry, “ Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord !” the Gospel, that the “ multitude” did so to Christ. The Law, that “ one of His Own familiar friends, in whom He trusted, which did eat of His bread, should lift up his heel against Him :” the Gospel, that Judas, who was one of Christ’s Disciples, and so ate of His bread, did betray Him into the hands of the Jews. The Law, that He should be “ prized at, and sold for, thirty pieces of silver,” with which should be “ bought the potter’s field :” the Gospel, that they covenanted with Judas to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, with which they afterwards “ bought the potter’s field.” The Law, that He “ should be numbered amongst transgressors :” the Gospel, that Jesus was “ crucified betwixt two thieves.” The Law, that He “ should be wounded and bruised :” the Gospel, that “ they scourged Jesus,” and “ smote Him.” The Law saith, they should “ pierce His hands and feet :” the Gospel, that “ they crucified Jesus,” which was a death wherein they used to pierce the hands and feet of those that were put to death, and nailed them to the cross. But though they should pierce His flesh, yet the Law saith, they should not “ break His bones, no, not one of them :” the Gospel, that they “ brake not the legs of Christ.” The Law, that they that should “ see Him should laugh Him to scorn, shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him :” the Gospel, that the Scribes and Elders did so to Christ. The Law saith,

Matt. 13. 13;
Mark 4. 12.

Isa. 53. 3.

Matt. 8. 20.

ch. 26. 38.

Luke 22. 44.

Zech. 9. 9.

John 12. 14;

Matt. 21. 6.

Ps. 118. 26.

Matt. 21. 9.

Ps. 41. 9.

Matt. 26. 47;

Luke 22. 47.

Zech. 11. 12,

13.

Matt. 26. 15.

ch. 27. 7.

Isa. 53. 12.

Mark 15. 27;

Matt. 27. 38.

Isa. 53. 5.

Matt. 27. 26.

Mark 15. 19.

Ps. 22. 16 ;

Zech. 12. 10.

Matt. 27. 35;

Luke 23. 33.

Ex. 12. 46 ;

Num. 9. 12;

Ps. 34. 20.

John 19. 33,

36.

Ps. 22. 8.

Matt. 27. 42,

43.

Ps. 69. 21. they should "give Him gall for meat, and vinegar to drink :"
 Matt. 27. 34, and the Gospel, that they gave Christ "vinegar to drink
 48.
 Ps. 22. 19. mingled with gall." The Law, that they should "part His
 garments amongst them, and cast lots upon His vesture :"
 Matt. 27. 35; the Gospel, that they "parted Jesus' garments, casting
 John 19. 23;
 Mark 15. 24. lots." And as for the time of this Jesus' coming into
 the world, it is certain that this Jesus came before the
 Luke 19. 45. "second Temple" was demolished, for it is said that He
 ver. 47. "went into it," yea, Himself "taught daily in it," by which
 Hag. 2. 9. means the "glory of the second Temple was greater than the
 glory of the first," according to the prophecy. And as for
 Gen. 49. 10. Jacob's prophecy, that the "sceptre should not depart from
 Judah, nor the lawgiver till Shiloh," or the Messiah,
 "come;" it is certain that it did not depart from Judah
 till Herod, by the senate of Rome, was made king of Judea,
 in whose days this Jesus was born. And so did Daniel's
 Matt. 2. 1;
 Luke 1. 5. seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, exactly
 reach unto and were determined in the days of this Jesus ;
 as might easily be demonstrated. So that all the old pro-
 phecies concerning the time of the Messiah's coming are
 perfectly fulfilled in this Jesus of Nazareth. But further,
 the Law saith, that though the Messiah should be crucified,
 Ps. 16. 10. "yet God would not leave His soul in Hell, nor suffer His
 Isa. 53. 10. Holy One to see corruption," and that "when God should
 make His soul an offering for sin, He should see His seed,
 and prolong His days," which plainly implies, that though
 the Messiah should die, yet He should rise again, and that
 within a few days too, otherwise He would have seen
 corruption. Now the Gospel saith, that this Jesus "rose
 Matt. 28. 6;
 Luke 24. 6.
 Matt. 28. 9. from the dead," and that He was "seen" of several "after
 ver. 16-18 ;
 Mark 16. 14. His resurrection," as of "Mary Magdalen," "of the eleven
 Disciples," of the "two that were going to Emmaus," of
 Luke 24. 13-
 15. "Peter," and of the "Disciples that were gathered together,
 ver. 34.
 John 20. 19. the door being shut." And to be sure it was Himself, and
 ch. 20. 27. not an apparition, Thomas, one of the twelve, "thrust his
 hands into His side," and found it flesh and blood indeed, as
 Luke 24. 43. before. "And He did eat before them," which it is impos-
 1Cor. 15. 6. sible for a spirit to do ; yea, "He was seen of above five
 ver. 8. hundred at one time," and of "Paul himself." Neither
 Mark 15. 42. did He lie so long as to "see corruption," for He was buried

but "the day before the Sabbath," and rose the day after. Mark 16. 1.
 Lastly, He was not only to rise again, but the Law saith,
 "He was to ascend on high, to lead captivity captive, and to Ps. 68. 18.
 give gifts to men." Now this cannot but be an undoubted
 character of the Messiah, not only to rise from the dead, but
 to ascend up to Heaven, and thence to disperse His gifts
 amongst the children of men; and that Jesus did so, is like-
 wise evident from the Gospel; for, "after He had spoken Mark 16. 19;
 with them, He was received up into Heaven, and there sat Luke 24. 51.
 at the right hand of God." And He gave such "gifts to Acts 2. 8.
 men," as that His Disciples of a sudden were enabled "to
 speak all manner of languages," to "work" many "signs ch. 5. 12.
 and wonders," "to heal all manner of diseases," yea, "with ver. 15, 16.
 a word" speaking, to "cure a man lame from his mother's ch. 3. 6, 7.
 womb."

Thus the Gospel seems to me to be a perfect transcript of
 the Law, and the histories of Jesus nothing else but the
 prophecies of Christ turned into an history. And when to
 this I join the consideration of the piety of the life which
 this Man led, the purity of the doctrine which He taught,
 and the miraculousness of the works He wrought, I cannot
 but be farther confirmed in the truth of what is here related.
 For the miracles which He wrought, as the healing of the [Matt. 8. 8-13; Luke 7. 15; 8. 54, 55; John 11. 43, 44; 6. 9-13, &c.]
 sick with a word of His mouth, raising the dead, feeding
 so many thousands with five loaves, and the like, were so
 powerful and convincing, that His very enemies, that would
 not believe Him to be the Messiah, could scarcely deny
 Him to be a God. And it is to this day a tenet amongst Joseph. Antiq. lib. xviii. c. 4.
 some of them, that the miracles which Jesus did were not
 the delusions and jugglements of the Devil, but real miracles,
 wrought as they say, by the virtue of the Name of God,
 יהוה; Jehovah, which He had gotten out of the Temple. By
 which it is plain they acknowledged God to be the Author
 of them, which I cannot see how He should be, unless they
 were agreeable to His will, and for the glory of His Name.

Neither was the doctrine of the Gospel only established
 at the first, but likewise propagated by miracles afterwards,
 as it was necessary it should be; for if it had been propa-
 gated without miracles, that itself had been the greatest
 miracle of all. It was, no doubt, a great miracle, that a

doctrine so much contrary to flesh and blood should be propagated by any means whatsoever ; but a far greater, that it should be propagated by a company of simple and illiterate men, who had neither power to force, nor eloquence to persuade, men to the embracing of it. For who would have thought that such persons as these were, should ever make any of the Jews, who expected a king for their Messiah, to advance them to temporal dignities, believe that that Jesus Whom themselves scourged and crucified at Jerusalem, was the Person? Or, that they should be able to propagate the Gospel amongst the Gentiles also, who neither believed in the true God, nor expected any thing of a Messiah to come and redeem them? But this they did, and brought over not only many persons, but whole nations and countries to the profession of the Gospel ; propagating this most holy doctrine amongst the most barbarous and sinful people in the world, maugre all the opposition that the world, the flesh, and the Devil, could make against it. Now, can any man that exerciseth his reason think they did all this purely by their own strength? No, sure, none of these wonderful effects could ever have been produced by any thing less than the wisdom, and power, and faithfulness of their Lord and Master, Whose service they were engaged in, and Who

Matt. 28. 20. promised to be with them “to the end of the world.” Questionless, it was nothing else but the Spirit of the Most High God that went along with them, and accompanied the word they preached ; otherwise it never could have made such deep impression upon the hearts of them that heard it, as not only to command their attention, but to hinder them from resisting, when they strove and endeavoured to do it, the power and authority by which the Disciples spake.

And now, methinks, I begin to perceive this Divine Spirit is come upon me too, and seems, by its powerful influence, to be working up my heart into a thorough persuasion that it is Christ, and Christ alone, I am to cast my soul upon ; that it is He alone that is the way to life, and His Word alone the Word of Life, which “ whosoever believes and is baptized into shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” Away, then, with your Paganish idolatries, your Mahometan superstitions, and Jewish ceremonies ; it is

[Mark 16. 16.]

the Christian religion alone that I am resolved to live and die in, because it is this alone in which I am taught to worship God aright, to obtain the pardon and remission of my sins, and to be made eternally happy. And since all its doctrines and precepts are contained in the Holy Scriptures, it is necessary that I should assent unto them, as a standing revelation of God's will, and an eternal treasure of Divine knowledge, whereby all that sincerely believe in Christ may be sufficiently instructed, as well as thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

Without any more ado, therefore, I believe, and am verily persuaded, that all the books of the Ancient Law, with all those that have been received into the canon of the Scripture by the Church of God, since the coming of Christ, which we call the New Testament,—I say, that all these books, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, are indeed the Word of the Eternal God, dictated by His Own Spirit, unto such as Himself was pleased to employ in the writing of them; and that they contain in them a perfect and complete rule of faith and manners, upon the due observance of which I cannot fail of worshipping and serving God in such a manner as will be acceptable to Him here, and of enjoying hereafter “those exceeding great [2Pet.1.4.] and precious promises” that He has reserved in Heaven for such as do so.

Unto these books, therefore, of the Law and Gospel, I am resolved, by His grace that wrote them, to conform all the ensuing articles of my faith, and all the actions and resolutions of my life. Insomuch, that whatsoever I find it hath pleased His Sacred Majesty herein to assert, I believe it is my duty to believe; and whatsoever He hath been pleased to command me, I believe it is my duty to perform.

ARTICLE III.

I believe, that as there is One God, so this One God is Three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THIS, I confess, is a mystery which I cannot possibly conceive, yet it is a truth which I can easily believe; yea, therefore it is so true that I can easily believe it, because it is so high that I cannot possibly conceive it: for it is impossible any thing should be true of the infinite Creator, which can be fully expressed to the capacities of a finite creature. And for this reason I ever did, and ever shall, look upon those apprehensions of God to be the truest, whereby we apprehend Him to be most incomprehensible; and that to be the most true of God, which seems most impossible unto us. Upon this ground, therefore, it is, that the mysteries of the Gospel, which I am less able to conceive, I think myself the more obliged to believe; especially this mystery of mysteries, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, which I am so far from being able to comprehend, or indeed to apprehend, that I cannot set myself seriously to think of it, or to screw up my thoughts a little concerning it, but I immediately lose myself as in a trance, or ecstasy: that God the Father should be One perfect God of Himself, God the Son One perfect God of Himself, and God the Holy Ghost One perfect God of Himself; and yet these Three should be but One perfect God of Himself; so that One should be perfectly Three, and Three perfectly One, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, should be Three, and yet but One; but One, and yet Three. O heart-amazing, thought-devouring, unconceivable mystery! Who cannot believe it to be true of the glorious Deity? Certainly none but such as are able to apprehend it, which I am sure I cannot, and believe no other creature can. And because no creature can possibly conceive how it should be so, I therefore believe it really to be so, viz. that the Being of all beings is but One in essence, yet Three in subsistence; but

one nature, yet Three Persons ; and that those Three Persons in that one nature, though absolutely distinct from one another, are yet but the same God. And I believe these Three Persons in this one nature are indeed to one another as they are expressed to be to us ; that the one is really a Father to the other, that the other is really a Son to Him, and the third the product of both ; and yet, that there is neither first, second, nor third amongst them, either in time or nature ; so that He that begat was not at all before Him that was begotten, nor He that proceeded from them both any whit after either of them : and therefore, that God is not termed Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as if the Divine nature of the one should beget the Divine nature of the second ; or the Divine nature of the first and second should issue forth the Divine nature of the third ; (for then there would be three Divine natures, and so Three Gods essentially distinct from one another ; by this means also only the Father would be truly God, because He only would be essentially of and from Himself, and the other two from Him). But what I think myself obliged to believe is, that it was not the Divine nature, but the Divine Person of the Father which did, from eternity, beget the Divine Person of the Son ; and from the Divine Persons of the Father and of the Son did, from eternity, proceed the Divine Person of the Holy Ghost ; and so one not being before the other in time or nature, as they are from eternity Three perfectly distinct Persons, so they are but One co-essential God. But dive not, O my soul, too deep into this bottomless ocean, this abyss of mysteries ; it is the Holy of Holies, presume not to enter into it ; but let this suffice thee, that He Who best knows Himself hath avouched it of Himself, and therefore thou oughtest to believe it. See Matt. xxviii. 19 : “ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And again, 1 John, v. 7 : “ There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost ; and these Three are One.”

ARTICLE IV.

I believe that I was conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and that ever since, I have been continually conceiving mischief, and bringing forth vanity.

THIS article of my faith I must of necessity believe, whether I will or no ; for if I could not believe it to be true, I should therefore have the more cause to believe it to be so ; because, unless my heart was naturally very sinful and corrupt, it would be impossible for me not to believe that which I have so much cause continually to bewail ; or if I do not bewail it, I have still the more cause to believe it : and therefore am so much the more persuaded of it, by how much the less I find myself affected with it. For certainly I must be a hard-hearted wretch indeed, steeped in sin and fraught with corruption to the highest, if I know myself so oft to have incensed the wrath of the Most High God against me as I do, and yet not be sensible of my natural corruption, nor acknowledge myself to be by nature a child of wrath, as well as others. For I verily believe, that the want of such a due sense of myself argues as much original corruption as murder and whoredom do actual pollution. And I shall ever suspect those to be the most under the power of that corruption, that labour most, by arguments, to divest it of its power. And therefore, for my own part, I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to go about to confute that by wilful arguments, which I find so true by woeful experience. If there be not a bitter root in my heart, whence proceeds so much bitter fruit in my life and conversation ? Alas ! I can neither set my head nor heart about any thing, but I still shew myself to be the sinful offspring of sinful parents, by being the sinful parent of a sinful offspring : nay, I do not only betray the inbred venom of my heart, by poisoning my common actions, but even my most religious performances also, with sin. I cannot pray but I sin, I cannot hear or preach a sermon but I sin, I cannot give an alms or

receive the Sacrament but I sin ; nay, I cannot so much as confess my sins, but my very confessions are still aggravations of them ; my repentance needs to be repented of, my tears want washing, and the very washing of my tears needs still to be washed over again with the blood of my Redeemer. Thus, not only the worst of my sins, but even the best of my duties, speak me a child of Adam. Insomuch, that whensoever I reflect upon my past actions, methinks I cannot but look upon my whole life, from the time of my conception to this very moment, to be but as one continued act of sin. And whence can such a continued stream of corruption flow, but from the corrupt cistern of my heart ? And whence can that corrupt cistern of my heart be filled, but from the corrupt fountain of my nature ? Cease, therefore, O my soul, to gainsay the power of original sin within thee, and labour now to subdue it under thee. But why do I speak of my subduing this sin myself ? Surely this would be both an argument of it, and an addition to it. It is to Thee, O my God, Who art both the Searcher and Cleanser of hearts, that I desire to make my moan. It is to Thee I cry out in the bitterness of my soul, “ O wretched man that I Rom. 7. 24. am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ? ” Who shall ? Oh, who can do it but Thyself ? Arise Thou, therefore, O my God, and shew Thyself as infinitely merciful in the pardoning, as Thou art infinitely powerful in the purging away, my sins.

ARTICLE V.

I believe the Son of God became the Son of Man, that I, the son of man, might become the son of God.

Oh ! how comfortably does this raise me from the lowest abasement of sin and misery, which I have before acknowledged to be my natural state, to the highest exaltation of happiness and glory in a spiritual one ! This is that great article of faith by which all the benefits of our Saviour's death and passion are made over to me in the new covenant,

and by which, if I perform the conditions therein required, I shall not only be retrieved from the bondage and corruption that is inherent in me, as a child of wrath, but be justified and accepted as the son of God, and be made a joint-heir with Christ. This is a point of the greatest moment and concern, which, by the grace and assistance of Him of Whom I speak, and in Whom I thus believe, I shall therefore be the more exact and particular in the searching and examining into. Now, when I say and believe that God became man, I do not so understand it, as if the Divine nature took upon it a human person, but that a Divine Person took upon Him the human nature; *i. e.* it was not the Divine nature in general, without respect to the persons, but one of the Persons in the Divine nature, which took flesh upon Him. And yet, to speak precisely, it was not the Divine Person abstracted or distinct from the Divine nature, but it was the Divine nature in that Person which thus took upon it the human. And this was not the first or third, but the second Person only in the sacred Trinity, that thus assumed our nature; as, considering the mysterious order and economy of the Divine Persons, it seems to be necessary that it should. For, first the Father could not have become this Son of Man, because then He that had begotten from eternity should have been begotten in time; by which means, as He was the Father to the Son, so would the Son also have been the Father unto Him, and so the order betwixt the Father and the Son destroyed. Nor, secondly, could the Holy Ghost have taken our nature upon Him, because the bond of personal union betwixt the Divine and human nature is from the Spirit, (and thence it is that every one that is partaker of Christ's Person is partaker of His Spirit also,) which could not be, if the Spirit itself had been the Person assuming. For I cannot conceive how the same Person could unite itself by itself to the assumed nature: and therefore we read, that in the Virgin's conception of our Saviour, it was neither the Father, nor the Son Himself,

Luke 1. 35. but the Spirit of the Most High which did "overshadow her." And farther, if the Holy Ghost had been my Redeemer, who should have been my Sanctifier? If He had died personally for me, who should have applied His death

effectually to me? That I could not do it myself, is, beyond contradiction, evident; and that either the Father or the Son should do it, is not agreeable to the nature or order of the Divine operations; They, as I believe, never acting any thing *ad extra*, personally, but by the Spirit proceeding from them both. And therefore it is, that Christ, to comfort His Disciples after His Death, promiseth them in His lifetime, that He would send them "the Comforter," which is "the Spirit of truth." He doth not say He will come again personally, but mystically to them by His Spirit. But now that the Spirit, Whose office it is to apply the merit and mediation of God-man to me, could not have done it, if Himself had been that God-man, seems to me as clear and manifest as the other: for if He had done it, He should either have done it by the Father, by the Son, or by Himself. He could not do it by the Father, nor the Son, because He doth nothing by Them, but all things from Them. The Father acts in the Son by the Spirit, the Son from the Father by the Spirit, the Spirit from the Father and the Son. And therefore it likewise follows, that as the Spirit could not unite itself before, so neither can it apply itself here to the human nature; for to assume the human nature into the Divine, and to apply the Divine nature to the human, are two distinct offices, and therefore to be performed by two distinct persons. The first could have been done only by One that was really man as well as God; the other only by one that was merely God, and not man; and that must needs be so; for otherwise God should act upon man by man, by the person man as well as God; and by consequence all the dispensations of His grace towards us would have been stopped in the frailty of the human, though perfect nature. So that it would have availed me nothing, if the Spirit had taken my nature upon Him, because, though He had assumed the human, I could not thence have participated of the Divine nature; nay, therefore, I could not have participated of this, because He had assumed that by which alone I could be brought into this capacity; and so by this means I should be further off than I was before. And lastly, as, if the Father had become man, there would have been two fathers; so, if the Spirit had become man,

John 16. 7.
ver. 13.

there would have been two sons ; the second person begotten from eternity, and the third person begotten in time. But now, by the Son's taking our nature upon Him, these and far greater difficulties are avoided, which we might easily perceive, could we sufficiently dive into the depth of that wisdom of the Father, in sending His Son rather than His Spirit, or coming Himself in His Own Person. Howsoever, to us it cannot but seem most equitable (if reason may hold the balance), that He Who is the middle Person betwixt the Father and the Spirit should become the Mediator betwixt God and man ; and that He Who is the Son of God in the glorious Trinity, should become the Son of Man in this gracious mystery.

But, on the other side, as it was not the Divine nature, but a Divine Person, that did assume, so neither was it a human person, but the human nature, that was assumed ; for otherwise, if He had assumed the person of any one man in the world, His death had been beneficial to none but him whose person He thus assumed and represented. Whereas, now that He has assumed the nature of man in general, all that partake of that nature are capable of partaking of the benefits He purchased for us by dying in our stead. And thus under each Adam, as the representation was universal, 1Cor.15.22. so were the effects designed to be : " For, as in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Again, when I say the Son of God became the Son of man, I do not mean as if by this He should cease to be what He was before, the Son of God ; for He did not leave His Godhead to take upon Him the manhood, but I believe He took the manhood into His Godhead : He did not put off the one to put on the other, but He put one upon the other : neither do I believe that the human nature, when assumed into the Divine, ceased to be human ; but as the Divine Person so assumed the human nature, as still to remain a Divine Person, so the human nature was so assumed into a Divine Person, as still to remain a human nature : God therefore so became man, as to be both perfectly God and perfectly man, united together in one person. I say in one person, for if He should be God and man in distinct persons, this would avail me no more than if He should be God only,

and not man, or man only, and not God ; because the merit and value both of His active and passive obedience is grounded merely upon the union of the two natures in one and the same person. He, therefore, by His life and death merited so much for us, because the same Person that so lived and died was God as well as man ; and every action that He did, and every passion that He suffered, was done and suffered by Him that was God as well as man. And hence it is that Christ, of all the persons in the world, is so fit, yea, only fit, to be my Redeemer, Mediator, and Surety ; because He alone is both God and man in One Person : if He was not man, He could not undertake that office : if He was not God, He could not perform it ; if He was not man, He could not be capable of being bound for me : if He was not God, He would not be able to pay my debt : it was man by whom the covenant was broken, and therefore man must have suitable punishment laid upon him ; it was God with Whom it was broken, and therefore God must have sufficient satisfaction made unto Him : and as for that satisfaction, it was man that had offended, and therefore man alone could make it suitable : it was God that was offended, and therefore God alone could make it sufficient.

The sum of all is this, man can suffer, but he cannot satisfy ; God can satisfy, but He cannot suffer ; but Christ, being both God and man, can both suffer and satisfy too ; and so is perfectly fit both to suffer for man, and to make satisfaction unto God—to reconcile God to man, and man to God. And thus, Christ having assumed my nature into His person, and so satisfied Divine justice for my sins, I am received into grace and favour again with the Most High God. Upon this principle, I believe that I, by nature the son of man, am made by grace the son of God, as really as Christ, by nature the Son of God, was made by office the Son of man ; and so, though in myself, I may say to corruption, “Thou art my mother,” yet in Christ I may say to [Job 17. 14.] God, “Abba, Father.” Neither do I believe this to be a [Rom. 8. 15.] metaphorical expression, viz. because He doeth that for me which a father doeth for his child, even provide for me whilst young, and give me my portion when come to age ; but I believe, that in the same propriety of speech that my

earthly father was called the father of my natural self, is God the Father of my spiritual self: for why was my earthly father called my father, but because that I, as to my natural being, was born of what proceeded from him, viz. his seed; why so, as to my spiritual being, am I born of what proceeds from God, His Spirit: and as I was not born of the very substance of my natural parents, but only of what came from them, so neither is my spiritual self begotten again, quickened, and constituted of the very substance of my Heavenly Father God, but of the Spirit and spiritual influences proceeding from Him. Thus therefore it is that I believe that Christ the Son of God became the Son of man; and thus it is that I believe myself, the son of man, to be made thereby the son of God. “I believe,” O my God and Father, “do thou help mine unbelief;” and every day more and more increase my faith, till itself shall be done away, and turned into the most perfect vision and fruition of Thine Own most glorious Godhead.

[Mark 9.
24.]

ARTICLE VI.

I believe that Christ lived to God, and died for sin, that I might die to sin, and live with God.

AND thus, by faith, I follow my Saviour from the womb to the tomb, from His incarnation to His death and passion, believing all that He did or suffered to be for my sake; for Christ did not only take my nature upon Him, but He suffered and obeyed, He underwent miseries, and undertook duties for me; so that not only His passive, but likewise His active obedience unto God in that nature was still for me. Not as if I believed His duty as man was not God's debt by the law of creation; yes, I believe that He owed that obedience unto God, that if He had committed but one sin, and that of the lightest tincture, in all His life-time, He would have been so far from being able to satisfy for my sins, that He could not have satisfied for His Own: “For such an High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless,

Heb. 7. 26,
27.

undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His Own sins, and then for the people's." So that if He had not had these qualifications in their absolute perfection, He could not have been our High-Priest, nor, by consequence, have made atonement for nor expiated any sins whatsoever. But now, though both as Man, and as God-man, or Mediator too, it behoved Him to be thus faithful and spotless, yet as being God, co-equal and co-essential with the Father, it was not out of duty, but merely upon our account, that He thus subjected His neck to the yoke of His Own Law, Himself as God being the Legislator or Lawgiver, and so no more under it than the Father Himself.

And hereupon it is that I verily believe, that whatsoever Christ either did or suffered in the flesh was meritorious; not that His life was righteous towards God only that His death might be meritorious for us (which I believe otherwise it could not have been), but that His life was equally meritorious as righteous. So that I believe my person is as really accepted as perfectly righteous, by the righteousness of His life imputed to me, as my sins are pardoned by God, for the bitterness of the death He suffered for them; His righteousness being as really by faith imputed to me, as my sins were laid upon Him: as these are set upon His, so is that set upon my score, and so every thing He did in His life, as well as every thing He suffered in His death, is mine: by the latter God looks upon me as perfectly innocent, and therefore not to be thrown down to Hell; by the former He looks upon me as perfectly righteous, and therefore to be brought up to Heaven.

And as for His death, I believe it was not only as much, but infinitely more satisfactory to Divine justice, than though I should have died to eternity; for by that means justice is actually and perfectly satisfied already, which it could never have been by my suffering for my sins myself; for if justice by that means could ever be satisfied, if it could ever say, 'It is enough,' it could not stand with the same justice, now satisfied, still to inflict punishment, nor, by consequence, could the damned justly scorch in the flames of God's wrath

for ever. Neither did the death of my Saviour reach only to the condemning, but likewise to the commanding power of sin; it did not only pluck out its sting, but likewise deprive it of its strength, so that He did not only merit by His death that I should never die for sin, but likewise that I should die to it. Neither did He only merit by His life that I should be accounted righteous in Him before God, but likewise that I should be made righteous in myself by God. Yea, I believe that Christ, by His death, hath so fully discharged the debt I owe to God, that now, for the remission of my sins, and the accepting of my person, (if I perform the conditions He requires in His covenant), I may not only appeal to the throne of grace, but likewise to the judgment-seat of God: I may not only cry, ‘Mercy, mercy, O Gracious Father!’ but ‘Justice, justice, my Righteous God!’ I may not only say, ‘Lord, be gracious and merciful,’ but ‘Be just and faithful to acquit me from that debt, and cancel that bond which my Surety hath paid for me, and which Thou hast

1 John 1. 9. promised to accept of;’ being “not only gracious and merciful, but just and faithful to forgive me my sins, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.”

ARTICLE VII.

I believe that Christ rose from the grave, that I might rise from sin; and that He is ascended into Heaven, that I may come unto Him.

As Christ came from Heaven to earth, so I believe He went from earth to Heaven, and all for the accomplishment of my salvation; that after He had lived a most holy life, He died a most cruel death; that He was apprehended, arraigned, accused, and condemned, by such as could not pronounce the sentence against Him, did not Himself at the same time vouchsafe them breath to do it; and that He that came into the world to take away the sins of it, to bring sinners to the joys of life, was Himself by those very sinners brought into the pangs of death. But yet, as it was not in the power of

death long to detain the Lord of life, so, though worms had power to send Him to the grave, yet I believe they had not power or time to feed upon Him there; for He rose again from the dead the third day: He lay three days, that I might believe He was not alive, but dead: He arose the third day, that I might believe He is not dead, but lives: He descended down into Hell, that He might make full satisfaction to God's justice for my sins; but He is now ascended up into Heaven, that He may make intercession to God's mercy for my soul: thither I believe He is gone, and there I believe He is, not as a private person, but as the Head and Saviour of His Church. And under this capacity, as I believe that Christ is there for me, so I am there in Him: "for where the Head is, there must the members be also;" that is, I am as really there in Him my representative now, as I shall be in my own proper person hereafter; and He is as really preparing my mansion for me there, as I am preparing myself for that mansion here. Nay, I believe that He is not only preparing a mansion for me in Heaven, but that Himself is likewise preparing me for this mansion upon earth; continually sending down and issuing forth from Himself fresh supplies and influences of His grace and Spirit; and all to qualify me for His service, and "make meet to be Col. 1. 12. partaker of His inheritance with the Saints in light."

Which inheritance I believe He doth not so much desire His Father to bestow upon me, as claims it for me, Himself having purchased it with the price of His Own blood. And as He hath purchased the inheritance itself, so likewise the way unto it for me; and therefore sues out for the pardon of those sins, and subduing those corruptions, which would make me unworthy of it: and for the conveyance of those graces to me whereby I may walk directly to it: not only saying to His Father concerning me, as Paul said to Philemon concerning Onesimus, "If this Thy servant oweth Thee any thing, set it upon My account, I will repay it;" but, 'What this Thy servant oweth Thee, see, it is set upon My score already, and I have paid it; what punishments he is indebted to Thee, for all the offences he hath committed against Thee, behold I have borne them already; see how I have been Philem. ver. 19.

- Isa. 53. 5. "wounded for his transgressions, and bruised for his iniquities, the chastisement of his peace was upon Me, with My stripes, therefore, let him be healed." ' And thus, as He once shed His blood for me amongst men, He now pleads it for me before God; and that not only for the washing out the guilt of my transgressions, but likewise for the washing away the filth of my corruptions, Himself having purchased the donation of the Spirit from the Father, He there claims the communication of it unto me. And that He hath thus undertaken to plead my cause for me, I have it under His Own hand and seal; Himself, by His Spirit, assuring me,
- 1 John 2. 1. that if I "sin, I have an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the Righteous;" so that I believe He is not so much my Solicitor at the mercy-seat, as my Advocate at the judgment-seat of God, there pleading my right and title to the crown of glory, and to every step of the way that I must go through the Kingdom of grace unto it. In a word, I believe that Christ, upon promise and engagement* to pay such a price for it in time, did purchase this inheritance for me from eternity; whereupon I was even then immediately chosen and elected unto it, and had by this means a place in Heaven before I had any being upon earth: and when the time appointed by covenant was come, I believe Christ, according to His promise, paid the purchase-money, even laid down His life for me; and then forthwith went up and took possession of this my kingdom, not for Himself, but for me, as my proxy and representative: so that whilst I am in my infancy, under age, I am in possession, though I have not the enjoyment of this my inheritance; but that is reserved for me till I come at age. And, howsoever, though I do not enjoy the whole as yet, my Father allows me as much of it as He sees convenient, so much grace and so much comfort as He thinks best; which are as a pledge of what He hath laid up for me in His Kingdom which is above.

ARTICLE VIII.

I believe that my person is only justified by the merit of Christ imputed to me; and that my nature is only sanctified by the Spirit of Christ implanted in me.

AND thus I do not only believe Christ to be my Saviour, but I believe only Christ to be my Saviour. It was He alone that “trode the wine-press of His Father’s wrath,” filled with the sour and bitter grapes of my sins. It was He that carried on the great work of my Salvation, being Himself both the “Author and Finisher” of it. I say, it was He, and He alone; for what person or persons in the world could do it besides Himself? The Angels could not if they would, the devils would not if they could; and as for my fellow-creatures, I may as well satisfy for their sins as they for mine; and how little able even the best of us are to do either, that is, to atone either for our own transgressions or those of others, every man’s experience will sufficiently inform him. For how should we poor worms of the earth ever hope, by the slime and mortar (if I may so speak) of our own natural abilities, to raise up a tower “whose top may reach to Heaven?” Can we expect, by the strength of our own hands, to take Heaven by violence? or by the price of our works to purchase eternal glory? It is a matter of admiration to me how any one, that pretends to the use of his reason, can imagine that he should be accepted before God for what comes from himself: for how is it possible that I should be justified by good works, when I can do no good works at all before I be first justified? My works cannot be accepted as good till my person be so; nor can my person be accepted by God till first engrafted into Christ; before which engrafting into the True Vine it is impossible I should bring forth good fruit: for “the plowing of the wicked is sin,” says Solomon; yea, “the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord.” And if both the civil and spiritual actions of the wicked be sin, which of all their actions

Rev. 19. 15.

Heb. 12. 2.

Gen. 11. 4.

Prov. 21. 4.
ch. 15. 8.

Isa. 64. 6.

shall have the honour to justify them before God? I know not how it is with others, but for my own part I do not remember, neither do I believe, that I ever prayed in all my lifetime with that reverence, or heard with that attention, or received the sacrament with that faith, or did any other work whatsoever with that pure heart and single eye as I ought to have done. Insomuch, that I look upon all my righteousnesses “but as filthy rags;” and it is in the robes only of the righteousness of the Son of God that I dare appear before the Majesty of Heaven. Nay, suppose I could at length attain to that perfection as to do good works, works exactly conformable to the will of God, yet they must have better eyes than I, that can see how my obedience in one kind can satisfy for my disobedience in another; or how, that which God commands from me should merit any thing from Him.

No, I believe there is no person can merit any thing from God, but he that can do more than is required of Him, which it is impossible any creature should do. For in that it is a creature, it continually depends upon God, and therefore is bound to do every thing it can by any means possibly do for Him; especially considering that the creature's dependence upon God is such, that it is beholden to Him even for every action that issues from it; without Whom, as it is impossible any thing should be, so likewise that any thing should act, especially what is good. So that to say a man of himself can merit any thing from God, is as much as to say that he can merit by that which of himself he doth not do, or that one person can merit by that which another performs, which is a plain contradiction. For in that it merits, it is necessarily implied that itself acts that by which it is said to merit; but in that it doth not depend upon itself, but upon another in what it acts, it is as necessarily implied that itself doth not do that by which it is said to merit. Upon this account I shall never be induced to believe that any creature, by any thing it doeth or can do, can merit or deserve any thing at the hand of God, till it can be proved that a creature can merit by that which God doeth; or that God can be bound to bestow any thing upon us, for that which Himself alone is pleased to work in us and by us; which,

in plain terms, would be as much as to say, that because God hath been pleased to do one good turn for us, He is therefore bound to do more; and because God hath enabled us to do our duty, He should therefore be bound to give us glory.

It is not, therefore, in the power of any person in the world to merit any thing from God, but such a one who is absolutely co-essential with Him, and so depends not upon Him either for His existence or actions. And as there is no person can merit any thing from God, unless he be essentially the same with Him, so likewise unless he be personally distinct from Him; forasmuch as though a person may be said to merit for himself, yet he cannot be said, without a gross solecism, to merit any thing from himself. So that he that is not as perfectly another person from God, as really the same in nature with Him, can never be said to merit any thing at His hands.

But further, God the Father could not properly be said to do it in His Own person, because being (according to our conception) the party offended, should He have undertaken this work for me, He, in His Own person, must have undertaken to make satisfaction to His Own person for the offences committed against Himself; which if He should have done, His mercy might have been much exalted, but His justice could not have been satisfied by it. For justice requires either that the party offending should be punished for these offences, or at least some fit person in his stead, which the Father Himself cannot be said to be, in that He was the party offended, to Whom this satisfaction was to be made: and it is absurd to suppose that the same person should be capable of making satisfaction both by and to himself at the same time.

It remains, therefore, that there were only two persons in the Holy Trinity who could possibly be invested with this capacity, the Son and the Spirit: as to the latter, though He be indeed the same in nature with the Father, and a distinct person from Him, and so far in a capacity to make satisfaction to Him, yet not being capable both of assuming the human nature into the Divine, and also uniting and applying the Divine nature to the human, (as I have shewed before in the fifth Article,) He was not in a capacity of

making satisfaction for man; none being fit to take that office upon him but He that of Himself was perfectly God, and likewise capable of becoming perfectly man, by uniting both natures in the same person; which the Holy Ghost could not do, because He was the person by Whom, and therefore could not be the person also in Whom, this union of the two natures was to be perfected. And yet it was by this means, and this method only, that any person could have been completely capacitated to have borne the punishment of our sins: he that was only man could not do it, because the sin was committed against God; and He that was only God could not do it, because the sin was committed by man.

From all which, as I may fairly infer, so I hope I may safely fix my faith in this Article, viz. that there was only one person in the whole world that could do this great work for me, of justifying my person before God, and so glorifying my soul with Him; and that was the Son of God, the second person in the glorious Trinity, begotten of the substance of the Father from all eternity; Whom I apprehend and believe to have brought about the great work of my justification before God, after this or the like manner.

He being in and of Himself perfectly co-equal, co-essential, and co-eternal with the Father, was in no sort bound to do more than the Father Himself did, and so whatsoever He should do, which the Father did not, might justly be accounted as a work of supererogation; which, without any violation of Divine justice, might be set upon the account of some other persons, even of such whom He pleased to do it for. And hereupon, out of mercy and compassion to fallen man, He covenants with His Father, that if it pleased His Majesty to accept it, He would take upon Him the suffering of those punishments which were due from Him to man, and the performance of those duties which were due from man to Him; so that whatsoever He should thus humble Himself to do or suffer, should wholly be upon the account of man, Himself not being any ways bound to do or suffer more in time than He had from eternity.

This motion, the Father, out of the riches of His grace and mercy, was pleased to consent unto: and hereupon the

Son assuming our nature into His Deity, becomes subject and obedient both to the moral and ceremonial Laws of His Father, and at last to death itself, “even the death of the cross.” In the one He paid an ‘active,’ in the other a ‘passive,’ obedience; and so did not only fulfil the will of His Father, in obeying what He had commanded, but satisfied His justice in suffering the punishment due to us for the transgressing of it. His ‘active’ obedience, as it was infinitely pure and perfect, did, without doubt, infinitely transcend all the obedience of the sons of men, even of Adam too in his primitive state. For the obedience of Adam, make the best of it, was but the obedience of a finite creature; whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of one that was infinite God, as well as man. By which means the laws of God had higher obedience performed to them than themselves in their primitive institution required; for being made only to finite creatures, they could command no more than the obedience of finite creatures; whereas the obedience of Christ was the obedience of One Who was the Infinite Creator as well as a finite creature.

Now this obedience being more than Christ was bound to, and only performed upon the account of those whose nature He had assumed, as we by faith lay hold upon it, so God through grace imputes it to us, as if it had been performed by us in our own persons. And hence it is, that as in one place Christ is said to be “made sin for us,” so in *2 Cor. 5. 21.* another place He is said to be “made” our “righteousness.” *1 Cor. 1. 30.* And in the forecited place, as He is said to be made “sin for us,” so we are said to be “made righteousness” in Him: but what righteousness? Our own? No; “the righteousness of God,” radically His, but imputatively ours: and this is the only way whereby we are said to be “made the righteousness of God,” even by the righteousness of Christ being made ours, by which we are accounted and reputed as righteous before God. These things considered, I very much wonder how any man can presume to exclude the active obedience of Christ from our justification before God; as if what Christ did in the flesh was only of duty, not at all of merit; or, as if it was for Himself, and not for us.

Especially when I consider that suffering the penalty is not what the Law primarily requireth; for the Law of God requires perfect obedience, the penalty being only threatened to (not properly required of) the breakers of it. For, let a man suffer the penalty of the Law in never so high a manner, he is not therefore accounted obedient to it; his punishment doth not speak his innocence, but rather his transgression of the Law. Hence it is that I cannot look upon Christ as having made full satisfaction to God's justice for me, unless He had performed the obedience I owe to God's Laws, as well as borne the punishment that is due to my sins: for though He should have borne my sins, I cannot see how that could denominate me righteous or obedient to the Law, so as to entitle me to eternal life, according to the tenure of the old Law, "Do this, and live." Which old covenant is not disannulled or abrogated by the covenant of grace, but rather "established," especially as to the obedience it requires from us, in order to the life it promiseth; otherwise the laws of God would be mutable, and so come short of the laws of the very Medes and Persians, which altered not. Obedience, therefore, is as strictly required under the New as it was under the Old Testament, but with this difference: there obedience in our own persons was required as absolutely necessary, here obedience in our Surety is accepted as completely sufficient. But now if we have no such obedience in our Surety, (as we cannot have, if He did not live as well as die for us,) let any one tell me what title he hath, or can have, to eternal life? I suppose he will tell me he hath none in himself, because he hath not performed perfect obedience to the Law. And I tell him he hath none in Christ, unless Christ performed that obedience for him, which none can say He did that doth not believe His active as well as passive obedience to be wholly upon our account. And now I speak of Christ's being our "Surety," as the Apostle calls Him, methinks this gives much light to the truth in hand: for what is a surety but one that undertakes to pay whatsoever he whose surety he is is bound to pay, in case the debtor prove non-solvent, or unable to pay it himself? And thus is Christ, under the notion of a surety, bound to pay whatever we owe to God,

Lev. 18. 5.

Rom. 3. 31.

[Dan. 6. 8.]

Heb. 7. 22.

because we ourselves are not able to pay it in our own persons. Now, there are two things which we owe to God, which this our Surety is bound to pay for us, viz. *first*, and principally, obedience to His laws, as He is our Creator and Governor; and, *secondly*, by consequence, the punishment that is annexed to the breach of these laws, of which we are guilty. Now, though Christ should pay the latter part of our debt for us, by bearing the punishment that is due unto us, yet if He did not pay the former, and principal part of it too, that is, perform the obedience which we owe to God, He would not fully have performed the office of suretyship which He undertook for us; and so would be but a half Mediator or half Saviour, which are such words as I dare scarce pronounce for fear of blasphemy.

So that though it is the death of Christ, by which I believe my sins are pardoned, yet it is the life of Christ by which I believe my person is accepted. His passions God accounts as suffered by me, and therefore I shall not die for sin: His obedience God accounts as performed by me, and therefore I shall live with Him. Not as if I believed that Christ so performed obedience for me, that I should be discharged from my duty to Him, but only that I should not be condemned by God in not discharging my duty to Him in so strict a manner as is required. I believe the active obedience of Christ will stand me in no stead, unless I endeavour after sincere obedience in mine own person: His active as well as His passive obedience being imputed unto none but only to such as apply it to themselves by faith; which faith in Christ will certainly put such as are possessed of it upon obedience unto God. This, therefore, is the righteousness, and the manner of that justification, whereby I hope to stand before the judgment-seat of God; even by God's imputing my sins to Christ, and Christ's righteousness to me; looking upon me as one not to be punished for my sins, because Christ hath suffered, but to be received into the joys of glory, because Christ hath performed obedience for me, and does by faith, through grace, impute it to me.

And thus it is into the merit of Christ that I resolve the whole work of my Salvation, and this not only as to that

which is wrought without me, for the justification of my person, but likewise as to what is wrought within me, for the sanctification of my nature. As I cannot have a sin pardoned without Christ, so neither can I have a sin subdued without Him; neither the fire of God's wrath can be quenched, nor yet the filth of my sins washed away, but by the blood of Christ. So that I wonder as much at the doctrine that some men have advanced concerning free-will, as I do at that which others have broached in favour of good works: and it is a mystery to me how any that ever had experience of God's method in working out sin, and planting grace in our hearts, should think they can do it by themselves, or any thing in order to it. Not that I do in the least question but that every man may be saved that will (for this I believe is a real truth); but I do not believe that any man of himself can will to be saved. Wheresoever God enables a soul effectually to will Salvation, He will certainly give Salvation to that soul: but I believe it is as impossible for any soul to will Salvation of himself, as to enjoy Salvation without God. And this my faith is not grounded upon a roving fancy, but the most solid reasons: forasmuch as of ourselves we are not able in our understandings to discern the evil from the good; much less then are we able in our wills to prefer the good before the evil; the will never settling upon any thing but what the judgment discovers to it. But now that my natural judgment is unable to apprehend and represent to my will the true and only good under its proper notion, my own too sad experience would sufficiently persuade me, though I had neither Scripture nor reason for it. And yet the Scripture also is so clear in this point, that I could not have denied it, though I should never have had any experience of it; the Most High expressly telling me,

1 Cor. 2. 14. that the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." "Neither can he know them," *i. e.* there is an absolute impossibility in it, that any one remaining in his natural principles, without the assistance of God, should apprehend or conceive the excellency of spiritual objects; so that a man may as soon read the letter of the Scripture without eyes, as under-

stand the mysteries of the Gospel without grace. And this is not at all to be wondered at, especially if we consider the vast and infinite disproportion betwixt the object and the faculty; the object to be apprehended being nothing less than the best of beings, God, and the faculty whereby we apprehend it, nothing more than the power of a finite creature, polluted with the worst of evils, sin. So that I believe it is a thousand times easier for a worm, a fly, or any other despicable insect whatsoever, to understand the affairs of men, than for the best of men, in a natural state to apprehend the things of God. No, there is none can know God, nor by consequence any thing that is really good, but only so far as they are partakers of the Divine nature. We must, in some measure, be like to God, before we can have any true conceptions of Him, or be really delighted with Him. We must have a spiritual sight, before we can behold spiritual things; which every natural man being destitute of, he can see no comeliness in Christ, why He should be desired; nor any amiableness in religion, why it should be embraced. And hence it is, that I believe the first work which God puts forth upon the soul, in order to its conversion, is to raise up a spiritual light within it, to clear up its apprehensions about spiritual matters, so as to enable the soul to look upon God as the chiefest good, and the enjoyment of Him as the greatest bliss; whereby the soul may clearly discern betwixt good and evil, and evidently perceive that nothing is good but so far as it is like to God, and nothing evil but so far as it resembles sin.

But this is not all the work that God hath to do upon a sinful soul, to bring it to Himself; for though I must confess, that in natural things the will always follows the ultimate dictates of the understanding, so as to choose and embrace what the understanding represents to it, under the comely dress of good and amiable, and to refuse and abhor whatever, under the same representation, appears to be evil and dangerous; I say, though I must confess it is so in natural, yet I believe it is not so in spiritual matters. For though the understanding may have never such clear apprehensions of spiritual good, yet the will is not at all affected with it, without the joint operations of the grace of God

upon us; all of us too sadly experiencing what St. Paul long ago bewailed in himself, that "what we do we allow not," that though our judgments condemn what we do, yet we cannot choose but do it; though our understandings clearly discover to us the excellency of grace and glory, yet our wills, overpowered with their own corruptions, are strangely hurried into sin and misery. I must confess, it is a truth which I should scarcely have ever believed, if I had not such daily experience of it: but, alas! there is scarce an hour in a day, but I may go about lamenting with Medea, in Seneca, *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*, 'though I see what is good, yea, and judge it to be the better, yet I very often choose the worse.' And the reason of it is, because as by our fall from God the whole soul was desperately corrupted, so it is not the rectifying of one faculty which can make the whole straight; but as the whole was changed from holiness to sin, so must the whole be changed again from sin to holiness, before it can be inserted into a state of grace, or so much as an act of grace be exerted by it. Now, therefore, the understanding and will being two distinct faculties, or at least two distinct acts in the soul, it is possible for the understanding to be so enlightened as to prefer the good before the evil, and yet for the will to remain so corrupt as to choose the evil before the good. And hence it is, that where God intends to work over a soul to Himself, He doth not only pass an enlightening act upon the understanding and its apprehensions, but likewise a sanctifying act upon the will and its affections, that when the soul perceives the glory of God and the beauty of holiness, it may presently close with, and entertain it with the choicest of its affections. And without God's thus drawing it, the understanding could never allure the soul to good. And therefore it is, that for all the clear discoveries which the understanding may make to itself concerning the glories of the invisible world, yet God assures us it is Himself alone that affects the soul with them, by inclining its will to them; for it is "God Which worketh in us both to will and to do of His Own good pleasure." So that though God offer Heaven to all that will accept of it in His Holy Scripture, yet none can accept of it but such whom Himself stirs up by His

[The passage occurs in Ovid, *Metam.* lib. vii. v. 20.]

Phil. 2. 13.

Holy Spirit to endeavour after it. And thus we find it was in Israel's return from Babylon to Jerusalem, though King Cyrus made a proclamation, that whosoever would might go up to worship at the holy city, yet there was none that accepted of the offer "but those whose spirit God had raised to go up." So here, though God doth, as it were, proclaim to all the world, that whosoever will come to Christ shall certainly be saved, yet it doth not follow that all shall receive Salvation from Him, because it is certain all will not come; or rather none can will to come, unless God enables them. Ezra 1. 3.
ver. 5.

I am sure, to say none shall be saved, but those that will of themselves, would be sad news for me, whose will is naturally so backward to every thing that is good. But this is my comfort, I am as certain my Salvation is of God, as I am certain it cannot be of myself. It is Christ Who vouchsafed to die for me, Who hath likewise promised to live within me; it is He that will work all my works both for me and in me too. In a word, it is to Him I am beholden, not only for my spiritual blessings and enjoyments, but even for my temporal ones too, which, in and through His Name, I daily put up my petitions for. So that I have not so much as a morsel of bread, in mercy, from God, but only upon the account of Christ; not a drop of drink, but what flows unto me in His blood. It is He that is the very blessing of all my blessings, without Whom my very mercies would prove but curses, and my prosperity would but work my ruin.

Whither, therefore, should I go, my dear and blessed Saviour, but unto Thee? "Thou hast the words of eternal life," and how shall I come but by Thee? Thou hast the treasures of all grace. O Thou that hast wrought out my Salvation for me, be pleased, likewise, to work this Salvation in me. Give me, I beseech Thee, such a measure of Thy grace, as to believe in Thee here upon earth, and then give me such degrees of glory as fully to enjoy Thee for ever in Heaven. [John 6.
68.]

ARTICLE IX.

I believe God entered into a double covenant with man, the covenant of works made with the first, and the covenant of grace made in the second, Adam.

THAT the Most High God should take a piece of earth, work it up into the frame and fashion of a man, and [Gen. 2. 7.] “breathe into his nostrils the breath of life,” and then [Lev. 18. 5.] should enter into a covenant with it, and should say, “Do this, and live,” when man was bound to do it whether he could live by it or no, was without doubt a great and amazing act of love and condescension; but that when this covenant was unhappily broken by the first, God should instantly vouchsafe to renew it in the second Adam; and that too upon better terms, and more easy conditions, than the former, was yet a more surprising mercy: for the same day that Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, did God Gen. 3. 15. make him this promise, that “the seed of the woman should break the serpent’s head.” And this promise He afterwards explained and confirmed by the mouth of His Prophet Jer. 31. 33. Jeremiah, saying, “This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days; I will put My Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people.” And again by St. Paul, under the New Testament, almost in the self-same words, Heb. viii. 10. A covenant so gracious and condescending, that it seems to be made up of nothing else but promises. The first was, properly speaking, a covenant of works, requiring on man’s part a perfect and unsinning obedience, without any extraordinary grace or assistance from God to enable him to perform it; but here in the second, God undertakes both for Himself and for man too, having digested the conditions to be performed by us into promises to be fulfilled by Himself, viz. that He will not only pardon our sins, if we do repent, but that He will give us repentance, that so we may deserve His pardon; that He

will not only give us life if we come to Christ, but even draw us to Christ, that so He may give us life; and so not only make us happy if we will be holy, but make us holy that so we may be happy: for the covenant is not that ‘He *will* be our God, if we *will* be His people,’ but “He *will* be our God, and we *shall* be His people.” But still all this is in and through Christ, the Surety and Mediator of this covenant, in Whom all the “promises are Yea and Amen.” So ^{2 Cor. 1. 20.} that Christ may be looked upon not only as a surety, but as a party in this covenant of grace, being not only bound to God, but likewise covenanting with Him for us. As God-man He is a surety for us, but as man He must needs be a party with us, even our Head in the covenant of grace, as Adam was in the covenant of works.

What, therefore, though I can do nothing in this covenant of myself, yet this is my comfort, that He hath undertaken for me Who can do all things. And therefore is it called a covenant of grace and not of works, because in it there is no work required from me, but what by grace I shall be enabled to perform.

And as for the tenour in which this covenant runs, or the habendum and grant which each party covenants for, it is expressed in these words, “I will be your God, and you shall be My people.” God covenants with us, that we shall be His people; we covenant with God, that He shall be our God. And what can God stipulate more to us, or we restipulate more to Him than this? What doth not God promise to us, when He promises to be our God; and what doth He not require from us, when He requires us to be His people?

First; He doth not say, I will be your hope, your help, your light, your life, your sun, your shield, and your exceeding great reward; but I will be your God, which is ten thousand times more than possibly can be couched under any other expressions whatsoever; as containing under it whatsoever God is, whatsoever God hath, and whatsoever God can do. All His essential attributes are still engaged for us, we may lay claim to them, and take hold on them: so that what the Prophet saith of His righteousness and strength, “Surely shall one say, in the Lord have ^{Isa. 45. 24.}

I righteousness and strength." I may extend to all His other attributes, and say, Surely in the Lord have I mercy to pardon me, wisdom to instruct me, power to protect me, truth to direct me, grace to crown my heart on earth, and glory to crown my head in Heaven: and if what He is, then much more what He hath, is here made over by covenant to me. "He that spared not His Own Son," saith the Apostle, "but delivered Him up for us all: how shall He not but with Him likewise freely give us all things?" But what hath God to give me? Why, all He hath is briefly summed up in this short inventory: whatsoever is in Heaven above, or in earth beneath, is His; and that this inventory is true, I have several witnesses to prove it, Melchizedech, and Moses, and David. Indeed, reason itself will conclude this, that He that is the Creator and Preserver must of necessity be the Owner and Possessor of all things; so that let me imagine what possibly I can in all the world, I may, with the pen of reason, write under it, 'This is God's.' And if I take but the pen of faith, with it I may write, 'This is mine in Jesus Christ.' As, for example, Hath He a Son? He hath died for me. Hath He a Spirit? It shall live within me. Is earth His? It shall be my provision. Is Heaven His? It shall be my portion. Hath He Angels? They shall guard me. Hath He comforts? They shall support me. Hath He grace? That shall make me holy. Hath He glory? That shall make me happy; for "the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly." And as He is nothing but what He is unto us, so He doeth nothing but what He doeth for us. So that whatsoever God doeth by His ordinary Providence, or (if our necessity requires) whatsoever He can do by His extraordinary power, I may be sure He doeth, and will do for me. Now He hath given Himself to me, and taken me unto Himself, what will He not do for me that He can? And what can He not do for me that He will? Do I want food? God can drop down manna from the clouds, or bid the quails come down and feed me with their own flesh, as they did the Israelites, or He can send the ravens to bring me bread and flesh, as they did His Prophet Elijah. Am I

Rom. 8. 32.

Gen. 14. 19.

Deut. 10. 14.

1 Chron. 29.

11.

Ps. 84. 11.

Ex. 16. 4.

ver. 13.

1 Kings, 17.

6.

thirsty? God can broach the rocks, and dissolve the flints into floods of water, as He did for Israel. Am I cast into a fiery furnace? He can suspend the fury of the raging flames, as He did for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Am I thrown amongst the devouring lions? He can stop their mouths, and make them as harmless lambs, as He did for Daniel. Am I ready to be swallowed up by the merciless waves of the tempestuous ocean? God can command a fish to come and ship me safe to land, and that in its own belly, as He did for His Prophet Jonah. Am I in prison? God can but speak the word, as He did for St. Peter, and the chains shall immediately fall off, and the doors fly open, and I shall be set at liberty, as he was. And thus I can have no wants, but God can supply them; no doubts, but God can resolve them; no fears, but God can dispel them; no dangers, but God can prevent them. And it is as certain that He will as that He can do these things for me, Himself having by covenant engaged and given Himself unto me.

And as in God's giving Himself, He hath given whatsoever He is, and whatsoever He hath unto me, and will do whatsoever He can do for me; so in my giving myself to Him, whatsoever I have I am to give to Him, and whatsoever I do I am to do for Him. But now, though we should thus give ourselves up wholly to God, and do whatever He requires of us (which none, I fear, without some degree of presumption, can say he has done), yet there is an infinite disproportion betwixt the grant on God's part and that on ours, in that He is God, and we but creatures, the "workmanship of His Own hands," to Whom it was our duty to give ourselves, whether He had ever given Himself to us or no: He is ours by covenant only, not by nature; we are His both by covenant and nature too. Hence we may infer that it is not only our duty to do what He hath commanded us, because He hath said, "Do this, and live," but because He hath said, "Do this;" yea, though He should say, 'Do this, and die,' it would still be our duty to do it, because we are His, wholly of His making, and therefore wholly at His disposing; insomuch, that should He put me upon doing that which would inevitably bring ruin upon me, I am not

to neglect obeying Him for fear of destroying myself, His will and pleasure being infinitely to be preferred before my life and salvation.

But if it were my duty to obey His commands, though I should die for it, how much more when He hath promised I shall live by it? Nay, I shall not only live if I obey, but my obedience itself shall be my life and happiness; for if I be obedient unto Him, He is pleased to account Himself as glorified by me, “For herein is my Father glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit.” Now what greater glory can possibly be desired than to glorify my Maker? How can I be more glorified by God than to have God glorified by me? It is the glory of God to glorify Himself; and what higher glory can a creature aspire after, than that which is the infinite glory of its all-glorious Creator? It is not therefore my duty only, but my glory, to give myself, and whatsoever I am, unto Him, to “glorify Him both in my body and in my spirit, which are His,” to lay out whatsoever I have for Him, to “honour Him with all my substance,” and “whether I eat or drink, or whatsoever I do, to do all to His glory.” Not as if it was possible for God to receive more glory from me now, than He had in Himself from all eternity. No, He was infinitely glorious then, and it is impossible for Him to be more glorious now; all that we can do is duly to acknowledge that glory which He hath in Himself, and to manifest it, as we ought, before others; which though it be no addition to His glory, yet it is the perfection of ours, which He is pleased to account as His.

As for the grant, therefore, in the covenant of grace, I believe it to be the same on our parts with that in the covenant of works; *i. e.* that we Christians are as much bound to obey the commands He lays upon us now, as the Jews under the old covenant were. What difference there is, is wholly and solely on God’s part; Who, instead of expecting obedience from us, is pleased in this new covenant to give this obedience to us. Instead of saying, “Do this, and live,” He hath in effect said, ‘I will enable you to do this, that so you may live.’ “I will put My laws into your minds, and write them in your hearts; and I will be to you a God, and you shall be to Me a people.” Not ‘I will, if

you will;' but 'I will, and you shall.' Not 'If you will do this, you shall live;' but 'You shall do this, and live.' So that God doth not require less from us, but only hath promised more to us in the new, than he did in the old covenant. There we were to perform obedience to God, but it was by our own strength; here we are to perform the same obedience still, but it is by His strength. Nay, as we have more obligations to obedience upon us now than we had before, by reason of God's expressing more grace and favour to us than formerly He did; so I believe God expects more from us under the new, than He did under the old covenant. In that He expected the obedience of men, in this He expects the obedience of Christians, such as are by faith united unto Christ, and in Christ unto Himself: and so are to do what they do, not by the strength of man as before, but by the strength of the Eternal God Himself; Who as He at first created me for Himself, so He hath now purchased me to Himself, received me into covenant with Him, and promised to enable me with grace to perform that obedience He requires from me; and therefore He now expects I should lay out myself, even whatsoever I have or am, wholly for Him and His glory.

This, therefore, being the tenour of this covenant of grace, it follows, that I am now none of my own, but wholly God's: I am His by creation, and His by redemption, and therefore ought to be His by conversation. Why therefore should I live any longer to myself, who am not my own, but God's? And why should I grudge to give myself to Him, Who did not grudge to give Himself for me? Or rather, why should I steal myself from Him who have already given myself to Him? But did I say, I have given myself to my God? Alas! it is but the restoring myself to Him, Whose I was ever since I had a being, and to Whom I am still infinitely more engaged, that I can thus cordially engage myself to Him; for as I am not my own, but His, so the very giving of myself to Him is not from myself, but from Him. I could not have given myself to Him, had He not first given Himself to me, and even wrought my mind into this resolution of giving myself to Him.

But having thus solemnly, by covenant, given myself to

Him, how doth it behove me to improve myself for Him? My soul is His, my body His, my parts His, my gifts His, my graces His, and whatsoever is mine is His; for without Him I could not have been, and therefore could have had nothing. So that I have no more cause to be proud of any thing I have, or am, than a page hath to be proud of his fine clothes, which are not his, but his master's; who bestows all this finery upon him, not for his page's honour or credit, but for his own. And thus it is with the best of us in respect of God; He gives men parts, and learning, and riches, and grace, and desires and expects that we should make a due use of them: but to what end? Not to gain honour and esteem to ourselves, to make us proud and haughty, but to give Him the honour due to His Name; and so employ them as instruments in promoting His glory and service. So that whensoever we do not lay out ourselves to the utmost of our power for Him, it is downright sacrilege, it is robbing God of that which is more properly His, than any man in the world can call any thing he hath his own.

Having therefore thus wholly surrendered and given up myself to God, so long as it shall please His Majesty to intrust me with myself, to lend me my being in this lower world, or to put any thing else into my hands, as time, health, strength, parts, or the like, I am resolved, by His grace, to lay out all for His glory. All the faculties of my soul, as I have given them to Him, so will I endeavour to improve them for Him; they shall still be at His most noble service; my understanding shall be His, to know Him; my will His, to choose Him; my affections His, to embrace Him; and all the members of my body shall act in subserviency to Him.

And thus having given myself to God on earth, I hope God in a short time will take me to Himself in Heaven; where as I gave myself to Him in time, He will give Himself to me unto all eternity.

ARTICLE X.

I believe that as God entered into a covenant of grace with us, so hath He signed this covenant to us by a double seal, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

As the covenant of works had two Sacraments, viz. 'the [Gen.3.22.] tree of life' and 'the tree of the knowledge of good and [ver. 17.] evil;' the first signifying and sealing life and happiness to the performance, the other death and misery to the breach of it: so the covenant of grace was likewise sealed with two typical Sacraments, 'Circumcision and the Passover;' the former was annexed at God's first making His covenant with Abraham's person, the other was added at His fulfilling the promises of it to his seed or posterity, which were therefore styled 'the Promised Seed.' But these being only typical of the true and spiritual Sacraments that were afterwards to take place upon the coming of the Messiah, there were then, in the 'fulness of time,' two other Sacraments substituted in their stead, viz. 'Baptism' and the 'Supper of the Lord.' And these Sacraments were both correspondent to the types by which they were represented.

As to the first, viz. 'Circumcision,' whether I consider the time of conferring it, or the end of its institution, I find it exactly answers to the Sacrament of Baptism in both these respects. For as the children under the Law were to be circumcised in their infancy at eight days old, so are the children under the Gospel to be baptized in their infancy too. And as the principal thing intended in the rite of Circumcision was to initiate or admit the children of the faithful into the Jewish Church; so the chief design of Baptism now, is to admit the children of such as profess themselves Christians into the Church of Christ. And for this reason, I believe, that as under the Old Testament children had the grant of covenant-privileges and Church-membership as really as their parents had, so this grant was not repealed, as is intimated, but further confirmed in Acts 2. 39.

the New Testament ; in that the Apostle calls the children
 1 Cor. 7. 14. of believing parents “ holy,” which cannot be understood of
 a real and inherent, but only of a relative and covenanted
 holiness, by virtue of which, being born of believing parents,
 themselves are accounted in the number of believers, and
 are therefore called “ holy children” under the Gospel, in
 Deut. 7. 6 ; the same sense that the people of Israel were called “ a
 14. 2-21. holy people” under the Law, as being all within the cove-
 nant of grace, which, through the faith of their parents, is
 thus sealed to them in their Baptism. Not that I think it
 necessary that all parents should be endued with what we
 call a saving faith, to entitle their children to these privi-
 leges, (for then none but the children of such who have the
 Spirit of Christ truly implanted in them would be qualified
 to partake of the covenant); but even such who, by an out-
 ward historical faith, have taken the Name of Christ upon
 them, are, by that means in covenant with God, and so ac-
 counted holy in respect of their profession, whatever they
 may be in point of practice. And if they are themselves
 holy, it follows on course that their children must be so too,
 they being esteemed as parts of their parents till made dis-
 tinct members in the body of Christ ; or, at least, till they
 come to the use of their reason and the improvement of
 their natural abilities.

And, therefore, though the seal be changed, yet the cove-
 nant-privileges, wherewith the parties stipulating unto God
 were before invested, are no whit altered or diminished ;
 believers’ children being as really confederates with their
 parents in the covenant of grace now, as they were before,
 under the Jewish administration of it. And this seems to
 be altogether necessary, for otherwise infants should be
 invested with privileges under the type, and be deprived of
 or excluded from them under the more perfect accomplish-
 ment of the same covenant in the thing typified ; and so the
 dispensations of God’s grace would be more straight and
 narrow since, than they were before the coming of our
 Saviour ; which I look upon to be no less than blasphemy
 to assert.

And, upon this ground, I believe it is as really the duty
 of Christians to baptize their children now as ever it was

the duty of the Israelites to circumcise theirs ; and therefore St. Peter's question, "Can any man forbid water, that these Acts 10. 47. should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" may very properly be applied to this case. Can any one forbid water, that children should not be baptized, who are in covenant with the Most High God as well as we? For what is it, I pray, that the right to Baptism doth depend upon? Surely, not upon performing the conditions of the covenant, for then none should be baptized but such as are true believers in themselves, and known to be so by us, and, by consequence, none at all ; it being only God's prerogative to search their hearts, and to know the truth of that grace which Himself hath been pleased to bestow upon them. But children's right to Baptism is grounded upon the outward profession of their believing parents ; so that as a king may be crowned in his cradle, not because he is able to wield the sceptre, or manage the affairs of his kingdom, but because he is heir to his father ; so here children are not therefore baptized because they are able to perform the conditions of the covenant which is sealed to them, but because they are children to believing parents. And this seems to be yet further evident from the very nature of seals, which are not administered or annexed to any covenant because the conditions are already performed, but rather that they may be performed ; and so children are not baptized because they are already true Christians, but that they may be so hereafter.

As for a command for Infant Baptism, I believe that the same Law that enjoined Circumcision to the Jewish enjoins Baptism likewise to Christian children, there being the same reason for both. The reason why the Jewish children were to be circumcised was because they were Jewish children, born of such as professed the true worship of God, and were in covenant with Him ; and there is the same reason why Christian children are to be baptized, even because they are Christian children, born of such as profess the true worship of the same God, and are confederates in the same covenant with the Jews themselves. And as there is the same reason, so likewise the same end for both, viz. that the children might be actually admitted into the same

covenant with their parents, and have it visibly confirmed to them by this initiating seal put upon them : so that Circumcision and Baptism are not two distinct seals, but the same seal diversely applied ; the one being but as a type of the other, and so to give place to it whensoever by the institution of Christ, it should be brought into the Church of God. And therefore the command for initiating children into the Church by Baptism remains still in force, though Circumcision, which was the type and shadow of it, be done away. And for this reason, I believe that was there never a command in the New Testament for Infant Baptism, yet, seeing there is one for Circumcision in the Old, and for Baptism, as coming into the place of it, in the New, I should look upon Baptism as necessarily to be applied to infants now, as Circumcision was then.

But why should it be supposed that there is no command in the New Testament for Infant Baptism ? There are several texts that seem to imply its being practised in the first preaching of the Gospel, as particularly in the case of Lydia and the keeper of the prison, who had their whole families baptized ; and we nowhere find that children were excepted. On the contrary, St. Peter, exhorting the converted Jews to be baptized, makes use of this argument to bring them to it, “ For the promise,” says he, “ is unto you and to your children,” which may as reasonably be understood of their infants as of their adult posterity. But besides, it was the express command of Christ to His Disciples, that they should “ go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” The meaning of which words I take to be this, ‘ Go ye and preach the Gospel amongst all nations, and endeavour thereby to bring them over to the embracing of it ; that, leaving all Jewish ceremonies and heathenish idolatries, they may profess my Name, and become my Disciples, receive the truth and follow me ; which, if they do, I charge you to “ baptize them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost :” ’ for the word μαθητεύσατε doth not signify ‘ to teach,’ but ‘ to make disciples,’ denoting the same here that μαθητὰς ποιεῖν doth upon the like occasion.

And this is the sense that all the ancient translations

agree in; nor indeed will the text itself bear any other, especially not that of teaching; for though the Apostles should have taught all nations, yet they were not presently to baptize them, unless they became disciples and professors of the doctrine that they were taught. A man may be taught the doctrine of the Gospel, and yet not believe it; and even though he should believe, yet unless he openly professes his faith in it, he ought not presently to be baptized. For without this outward profession, the very possessing of Christ cannot entitle a man to this privilege before men, though it doth before God; because we cannot know how any one stands affected towards Christ, but only by his outward profession of Him. It is the inward possession of Christ's Person that entitles us to the inward spiritual grace; but it is the outward profession of His Name only that entitles us to the outward visible sign in Baptism: so that a man must of necessity be a professed disciple of the Gospel before he can be admitted into the Church of Christ. And hence it is that the words must necessarily be understood of discipling or bringing the nations over to the profession of the Christian religion: or else we must suppose, what ought not to be granted, that our Saviour must command many that were visible enemies to His cross to be received into His Church; for many of the Jews were taught and instructed in the doctrine of the Gospel, who, notwithstanding, were inveterate enemies unto Christ. They were taught, that He was the Messiah and Saviour of the world, and that "whosoever believed in Him should not [John 3. 16.] perish, but have everlasting life;" and they had all the reason in the world to be convinced of it; yet I hope there is none will say, that the bare knowledge of, or tacit assent unto, these things, are a sufficient ground for their reception into the Church.

Now, as it was in the Jewish Church, when any one became a proselyte, not only himself but whatsoever children he afterwards had, were to be circumcised; so in the Church of Christ, whensoever any person is brought over into the profession of the Christian religion, His seed are all equally invested with the outward privileges of it with himself, though they be not, as yet, come to years of dis-

cretion, nor able of themselves to make their profession of that religion they are to be received and baptized into. For so long as children are in their infancy, they are (as I before observed) looked upon as parts of their parents, and are therefore accounted holy by the outward profession which their parents, under whom they are comprehended, make of it; and in this sense, “the unbelieving husband”
 1 Cor. 7. 14. is said to be “sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband;” that is, man and wife being made one flesh, they are denominated, from the better part, holy, and so are their children too.

And hence it is that I verily believe, that in the commission which our Saviour gave to His Apostles, to “disciple and baptize all nations,” He meant, that they should preach the Gospel in all nations, and thereby bring over all persons of understanding and discretion to the profession of His Name, and, in them, their children; and so engraft both root and branch into Himself, the True Vine, by baptizing both parents and children “in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”
 [Matt. 28. 19.]

The main objection against this is, that infants are not in a capacity either to learn and understand their duty in this covenant, or to stipulate and promise for their future performance of the conditions of it. But this difficulty is easily removed when I consider, that it is not by virtue of their own faith or knowledge, but that of their parents, that they are admitted to this Sacrament; nor is it required that they should stipulate or promise in their own persons, but by their godfathers or sponsors, who enter into this engagement for them, and oblige them, when they come of age, to take it upon themselves; which accordingly they do. And this engagement by proxy does as effectually bind them to the performance of the conditions, as if they were actually in a capacity to have stipulated for themselves, or sealed the covenant in their own persons. For these spiritual signs or seals are not designed to make God’s word surer to us, but only to make our faith stronger in Him; nor are they of the substance of the Covenant, but only for the better confirmation of it.

And as Baptism thus comes in the place of the Jews’

Circumcision, so doth our Lord's Supper answer to their Passover. Their Paschal Lamb represented our Saviour Christ, and the sacrificing of it the shedding of His blood upon the cross; and as the Passover was the memorial of the Israelites' redemption from Egypt's bondage, so is the Lord's Supper the memorial of our redemption from the slavery of sin, and assertion into Christian liberty: or rather, it is a solemn and lively representation of the death of Christ, and offering it again to God, as an atonement for sin and reconciliation to His favour. Exod. 12. 14.

So that I believe this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper under the Gospel succeeds to the rite of sacrificing under the Law, and is properly called the Christian sacrifice, as representing the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. And the end of both is the same: for as the sacrifices under the Law were designed as a propitiation or atonement for sins, by transferring the punishment from the offerer to the thing offered, which is therefore called "the accursed thing," as we read, Lev. xvii. 11, so under the Gospel we are told that it was for this end that our Saviour died and suffered in our stead, that He might obtain the pardon of our sins, and reconcile us to His Father, by laying the guilt of them upon His Own Person. And accordingly He says of Himself, that "He came to give His life a ransom for many;" and St. Paul tells us, that "He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin." Matt. 20. 28.
2 Cor. 5. 21.

And as the end of both institutions was the same, so they were both equally extended. The Paschal Lamb was offered for all the congregation of Israel, and so is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to be administered to all the faithful people in Christ, that do not exclude themselves from it. And for this reason I believe, that as all the congregation of Israel was to eat the Passover, so is all the society of Christians to receive the Lord's Supper: those only to be excepted, who are altogether ignorant of the nature of that covenant it seals, or openly and scandalously guilty of the breach of the condition it requires.

But why, say some, should there be any exception? Did not Christ die for all mankind? And is not that death said

[Eph. 4.
33.]

1Cor.11.29.

to be “ a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world ? ” All this is true : but it does not from hence follow that all men must be actually saved and absolved from their sins by virtue of His death. No ; it is only they who apply to themselves the merits of His passion, by partaking duly of this Holy Sacrament, which is the proper means by which these blessings are conveyed to us, “ whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption.” I say ‘ duly,’ because though this Sacrament was ordained for all, yet all will not make themselves worthy of it ; and those that are not so, are so far from reaping any benefit from it, that, as the Apostle says, “ they eat and drink their own damnation, not discerning the Lord’s body,” And therefore I believe that, as in the institution of the Passover there were some particular duties and ceremonies enjoined for the better solemnization of it, so there are some preparatory duties and qualifications necessarily required for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, which, before I presume to partake of it, I must always use my utmost endeavours to exercise myself in.

And these are, *First*, That I should examine, confess, and bewail my sins before God, with a true sense of and sorrow for them, and, taking firm resolutions for the time to come utterly to relinquish and forsake them, solemnly engage myself in a new and truly Christian course of life.

Secondly, That I should ‘ be in perfect charity with all men,’ that is, that I should heartily forgive those who have any ways injured or offended me, and make restitution or satisfaction to such whom I have, in any respect, injured or offended myself.

And then, *thirdly*, That I should, with an humble and obedient heart, exercise the acts of faith, and love, and devotion, during the celebration of that holy mystery ; and express the sense I have of this mystery, by devout praises and thanksgivings for the great mercies and favours that God vouchsafes to me therein ; and by all the ways and measures of charity that He has prescribed, manifest my love to my Redeemer, by my love and beneficence to my Christian brethren.

These are the proper graces, this is the wedding-garment, that every true Christian, who comes to be a guest at this Holy Supper, ought to be clothed and invested with.

Do thou, O Blessed Jesus! adorn me with this holy robe, and inspire my soul with such Heavenly qualities and dispositions as these; and then I need not fear but that as "oft as I eat the flesh of Christ, and drink His blood," I shall effectually obtain the pardon and remission of my sins, the sanctifying influences of His Holy Spirit, and a certain interest in the Kingdom of glory.

See further, Treatise of the Sacrament.*

ARTICLE XI.

I believe that after a short separation, my soul and body shall be united together again, in order to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be finally sentenced according to my deserts.

I KNOW this body, which for the present I am tied to, is nothing else but a piece of clay made up into the frame and fashion of a man; and therefore, as it was first taken from the dust, so shall it return to dust again: but then I believe, on the other hand, that it shall as really be raised from the earth, as ever it shall be carried to it; yea, though perhaps it may go through a hundred or a thousand changes before that day come. There are, I confess, some points in this Article which are hardly to be solved by human reason; but I believe there are none so difficult but what may be reconciled by a Divine faith: though it be too hard for me to know, yet it is not too hard for God to do. He that should have told me, some years ago, that my body then was, or should be, a mixture of particles fetched from so many parts of the world, and undergo so many changes and alterations as to become in a manner new, should scarce have extorted

* The Treatise above alluded to, is supposed to be "The Great Necessity and Advantage of Frequent Communion," printed after Bishop Beveridge's decease, and which will be found in the subsequent part of the present volume.—EDITOR.

the belief of it from me, though now I believe it to be a real truth; the meats, fruits, and spices, which we eat, being transported from several different places and nations, and by natural digestion transfused into the constitution of the body. And why should not I believe that the same Almighty Power Who made these several beings or particles of matter by which I am fed and sustained, can as easily, with His Word, recall each part again from the most secret or remote place that it can possibly be transported to? Or, that He Who framed me out of the dust, can, with as much ease, gather all the scattered parts of the body, and put them together again as He at first formed it into such a shape, and infused into it a spiritual being?

And this Article of my faith I believe is not only grounded upon, but may, even by the force of reason, be deduced from, the principles of justice and equity, justice requiring, that they who are co-partners in vice and virtue should be co-partners also in punishments and rewards. There is scarce a sin a man commits but his body hath a share in it; for though the sin committed would not be a sin without the soul, yet it could not be committed without the body; the sinfulness of it depends upon the former, but the commission of it may lawfully be charged upon the latter: the body could not sin if the soul did not consent; nor could the soul sin (especially so oft) if the body did not tempt to it. And this is particularly observable in the sins of adultery, drunkenness, and gluttony, which the soul of itself cannot commit, neither would it ever consent unto them, did not the prevalent humours of the body, as it were, force it to do so. For in these sins, the act that is sinful is wholly performed by the body, though the sinfulness of that act doth principally depend upon the soul.

Neither is the body only partner with the soul in these grosser sins, but even the more spiritual sins, which seem to be most abstracted from the temperature of the body, as if they depended only upon the pravity and corruption of the soul,—I say, even these are partly to be ascribed to the body. For instance, an atheistical thought, which one would think was to be laid only upon the soul, because the thought takes its rise from thence; yet if we seriously weigh and

consider the matter, we shall find that it is usually the sinful affections of the body that thus debauch the mind into these blasphemous thoughts; and that it is the pleasures of sense that first suggest them to us, and raise them in us: and this appears, in that there is no person that ever was, or indeed ever can be, an atheist at all times; but such thoughts spring up in the fountain of the soul, only when muddled with fleshly pleasures. And thus it is in most other sins, the carnal appetite having gotten the reins into its hand, it misleads the reason, and hurries the soul wheresoever it pleaseth. And what then can be more reasonable, than that the body should be punished, both for its usurping the soul's prerogative, and for its tyrannizing so much over that which at the first it was made to be subject to? But further, it is the body that enjoys the pleasure, and therefore good reason that the body should likewise bear the punishment, of sin. Indeed I cannot conceive how it can stand with the principles of justice, but that the body, which both accompanies the soul in sin, enjoys the pleasures of it, and leads the soul into it, should bear a share in the miseries which are due to and inflicted upon it. For what doth justice require, but to punish the person that offends for the offence he commits: whereas, if the soul only, and not the body, were to suffer, the person would not suffer at all; the body being part of the person as well as the soul, and therefore the soul no person without the body.

Hence it is, that though the Scripture had been silent in this point, yet, methinks, I could not but have believed it. How much more firm and steadfast then ought I to be in my faith, when Truth itself hath been pleased so expressly to affirm it! For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, "Thy dead Isa. 26. 19. men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth Dan. 12. 2. shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And thus saith the Saviour of the world, "Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life," "The hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves John 5. 28, shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have ^{29.} done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The same

hath it pleased His Divine Majesty to assert and prove with
 Matt. 22. 31, His Own mouth, and by His Spirit, and in many other
 32. places. From all which I may with comfort and confidence
 1 Cor. 15. draw the same conclusion that holy Job did, and say, "I
 Job. 19. 25-27. know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at
 the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin
 worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God;
 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold,
 and not another; though my reins be consumed within
 me."

And as I believe my body shall be thus raised from the
 grave, so I believe the other part of me, my soul, shall never
 be carried to it; I mean, it shall never die, but shall be as
 much, yea more, alive, when I am dying, than it is now, by
 so much as my soul shall be the more active in itself, by how
 much it is less tied and subjected to the body.

And further I believe, that so soon as ever my breath is
 out of my nostrils, my soul shall remove her lodging into the
 other world, there to live as really to eternity, as I now live
 here in time. Yea, I am more certain that my soul shall
 [Eccles. 12. "return to God that gave it," than that my body shall return
 7.] to the earth, out of which I had it. For I know it is possible
 my body may be made immortal, but I am sure my soul shall
 never be mortal. I know that at the first the body did
 equally participate of immortality with the soul, and that
 had not sin made the divorce, they had lived together like
 loving mates to all eternity. And I dare not affirm that
 Enoch and Elias underwent the common fate, or suppose
 they did; yet, sure I am the time will come, when thousands
 of men and women shall not be dissolved and die, but be
 immediately changed and caught up into Heaven, or, to their
 eternal confusion, thrust down into Hell; whose bodies,
 therefore, shall undergo no such thing as rotting in the
 grave, or being eaten up by worms, but, together with their
 souls, shall immediately launch into the vast ocean of eter-
 nity. But who ever yet read or heard of a soul's funeral?
 Who is it? Where is the man? Or, what is his name that
 wrote the history of her life and death? Can any disease
 arise in a spiritual substance, wherein there is no such thing
 as contrariety of principles or qualities to occasion any dis-

order or distemper? Can an Angel be sick or die? And if not an Angel, why a soul, which is endowed with the same spiritual nature here, and shall be adorned with the same eternal glory hereafter? No, no, deceive not thyself, my soul, for it is more certain that thou shalt always live, than that thy body shall ever die.

Not that I think my soul must always live, in despite of Omnipotence itself, as if it was not in the power of the Almighty to take my being and existence from me; for I know I am but as a "potsherd" in the "Potter's hand," and that it is as easy for Him to dash me in pieces now, as it was to raise me up at the first. I believe it as easy for Him to command my soul out of its being as out of its body; and to send me back into my mother nothing, out of whose womb He took me, as it was at first to fetch me thence. I know He could do it if He would; but Himself hath said He will not, and therefore I am sure He cannot do it; and that not because He hath not power, but because He hath not will to do it; it being impossible for Him to do that which He doth not will to do. And that it is not His will or pleasure ever to annihilate my soul, I have it under His Own hand, that my "dust shall return to the earth as it was, and my spirit to God that gave it." And if it return to God, it is so far from returning to nothing, that it returns to the Being of all beings; and so death to me will be nothing more than going home to my Father and mother; my soul goes to my Father, God, and my body to my mother, earth. Eccles. 12. 7.

Thus likewise hath it pleased His Sacred Majesty to assure me, that if our "earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens," so clearly hath the Great God "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." The light of nature shews the soul can never perish or be dissolved, without the immediate interposition of God's Omnipotence, and we have His Own Divine Word for it, that He will never use that power in the dissolution of it. And therefore I may, with the greatest assurance, affirm and believe, that as really as I now live, so really shall I never die; but that my soul, at the very moment of its departure from the flesh, shall immediately mount up to the 2 Cor. 5. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 10.

tribunal of the Most High God, there to be judged, first privately, by itself (or perhaps with some other souls, that shall be summoned to appear before God the same moment). And then, from these private sessions I believe that every soul that ever was or shall be separated from the body, must either be received into the mansions of Heaven, or else sent down to the dungeon of Hell, there to remain till the grand assizes, the “judgment of the Great Day, when the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.” And “when” our bodies, by the Word of the Almighty God, shall be thus called together again, I believe that our souls shall be all prepared to meet them, and be united again to them, and so both “appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, to receive” sentence “according to what they have done in the flesh, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” And though it is very difficult, or rather impossible, for me to conceive or determine the particular circumstances of this Grand Assize, or the manner and method how it shall be managed, yet from the light and intimations that God has vouchsafed to give us of it, I have grounds to believe it will be ordered and carried on after this or the like manner.

1 Cor. 15. 52.

[2 Cor. 5.
10.]John 5. 22;
Acts 17. 31.
1 Thes. 4. 16.

Matt. 25. 31.

ch. 24. 31.

ch. 13. 49.

ch. 25. 32, 33.

The day and place being appointed by the King of kings, the glorious Majesty of Heaven, the Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, Who long ago received His commission from the Father, to be the “Judge of quick and dead,” “shall descend from Heaven with the shout of the Archangel, and with the trump of God,” royally attended with an innumerable company of “glorious Angels.” These He shall send with the great sound of a trumpet, and they “shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of Heaven to the other,” yea, and the wicked too, from whatsoever place they shall be in; and then shall He “sever the wicked from the just.” So that all nations, and every particular person that ever did or ever shall live upon the face of the earth, shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall “separate the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and shall set His sheep on His right hand, but the goats upon the left.”

Things being thus set in order, the Judge shall read His

Commission, that is, declare and manifest Himself to be the Judge of all the earth, sent by the God of Heaven to judge them that had condemned Him, and in that very body that once was crucified upon the cross at Jerusalem for our sins. So that all the world shall then behold Him shining in all His glory and majesty, and shall acknowledge Him to be now what they would not believe Him to be before, even both God and man, and so the Judge of all the world, from Whom there can be no appeal. And having thus declared His Commission, I believe the first work He will go upon will be to open the “book of God’s remembrance,” and to [Mal. 3. 16.] cause all the indictments to be read that there are found on record against those on His right hand; but behold all the black lines of their sins being blotted out with the red lines of their Saviour’s blood, and nothing but their good works, their prayers, their sermons, their meditations, their alms, and the like, to be found there; the Righteous Judge, before Whom they stand, turning Himself towards them, with a serene and smiling countenance, will declare to them, before all the world, that their sins are pardoned, and their persons accepted by Him, as having believed in Him; and therefore will He immediately proceed to pronounce the happy sentence of election upon them, saying, “Come, ye blessed of [Matt. 25. 34.] My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

The sentence being thus pronounced, the righteous (and I hope myself among the rest) shall go up with shouts of joy and triumph, to sit with our Blessed Redeemer to judge the other parts of the world, who stand at the left hand of the Tribunal, with ghastly countenances and trembling hearts, to receive their last and dreadful doom. Against these, all the sins that ever they committed, or were guilty of, shall be brought up in judgment against them, as they are found on record in the book of God’s remembrance, and the indictment read against every particular person, high or low, for every particular sin, great or small, which they have committed.

And the truth of this indictment shall be attested by their own consciences, crying, ‘Guilty, guilty:’ I say, by their own consciences, which are as a thousand witnesses; yea,

[Matt. 25.
41.]

and by the Omniscience of God too, which is as a thousand consciences. And therefore, without any further delay, shall the Judge proceed to pronounce the sentence, the doleful sentence of condemnation upon them, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels."

This, I believe, or such like, will be the method of Christ's proceeding with us in that great and terrible day of trial and retribution.

[ch. 10. 28.]

Oh! may these awful thoughts and ideas of it always accompany me, and strike such a deep and lively impression upon my heart, in every action of life, as to deter me from offending this just and Almighty Being, in Whose power it is to "destroy both body and soul in Hell;" and engage me in such a regular, strict, and conscientious course of life, as to be always ready, whenever He shall be pleased to summon me, to give in my accounts at the Grand Audit, and with a holy assurance fly for mercy and succour into the hands of my Redeemer, and be permitted to enter into the joys of His rest.

ARTICLE XII.

I believe there are two other worlds besides this I live in, a world of misery for unrepenting sinners, and a world of glory for believing saints.

WHEN death hath opened the cage of flesh wherein the soul is penned up, whither it flies, or how it subsists, I think it not easy to determine, or indeed to conceive. As for the Platonic ærial and ethereal vehicles succeeding this terrestrial one, I find neither mention of, nor warrant for them in the Word of God. And, indeed, to suppose that a spiritual substance cannot subsist of itself, without being supported by a corporeal vehicle, is in my opinion too gross a conceit for any philosopher, much more for one that professes himself a divine, to advance or entertain. Only this I am sure of, that according to the distinction of lives here into good or bad, and the sentences passed upon all

hereafter, of absolution or condemnation, there will be a two-fold receptacle for the souls of men, the one of happiness, the other of misery.

As to the first, I believe, that at the great and general assizes of the world, there will be a glorious entrance opened for the righteous into the holy of holies, the seat and fountain of all bliss and happiness, where they shall draw nigh to the Most High God, behold His presence in righteousness, and reign with Him for ever in glory, where they “shall see Him face to face,” “and know Him, the ^{1 Cor. 13. 12.} only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent.” And ^{John 17. 3.} this knowing and beholding God face to face, is, I believe, the very Heaven of Heavens, even the highest happiness that it is possible a creature should be made capable of: for, in having a perfect knowledge of God, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all things that ever were, are, shall, yea, or can be, in the world. For, God being the Being of all beings, in seeing Him, we shall not only see whatsoever hath been, but whatsoever can be communicated from Him: the contemplation of which cannot but ravish and transport my spirit beyond itself; especially when I consider, that in knowing this One-All-Things, God, I cannot but enjoy whatsoever it is possible any creature should enjoy. For the knowing of a thing is the soul’s enjoyment of it; the understanding being to the soul what the senses are to the body. And therefore as the body enjoys nothing but by its senses, so neither doth the soul enjoy any thing but by its understanding: and as the body is said to have whatsoever affects its proper senses, so may the soul be said to have whatsoever comes under its knowledge. Nay, the soul so far hath what it knows, that, in a manner it is what it knows; itself being in a spiritual manner, enlarged according to the extent of the objects which it knows, as the body is by the meat it eats; the truths we know turning into the substance of our souls, as the meat we eat doth into the substance of our bodies. But O! what a rare soul shall I then have, when it shall be extended to every thing that ever was or ever could have been! What a happy creature shall I then be, when I shall know and so enjoy Him that is all things in Himself! What can a creature desire more?

yea, what more can a creature be made capable of enjoying or desiring? And that which will always accompany this our knowledge and enjoyment, is perfect love to what we enjoy and know, without which we should take pleasure in nothing, though we should have all things to take pleasure in. But who will be able not to love the chiefest good, that knows and enjoys Him, and therefore enjoys Him because he knows Him? Questionless, in Heaven, as I shall enjoy whatsoever I can love, so shall I love whatsoever I enjoy. And this therefore I believe to be the perfection of my happiness, and the happiness of my perfection, in the other world, that I shall perfectly know and love, and so perfectly enjoy and rejoice in the Most High God; and shall be, as known, so perfectly loved and rejoiced in by Him. And, questionless, for all our shallow apprehensions and low estimations of these things now, they cannot choose but be vast and unconceivable pleasures, too great for any creature to enjoy whilst here below.

If we have but the least drop of these pleasures distilled unto us here upon earth, how strangely do they make us, as it were, beside ourselves, by lifting us above ourselves! If we can but at any time get a glimpse of God, and of His love to us how are we immediately carried beyond all other pleasures and contentments whatsoever! How apt are we to say with Peter, "It is good for us to be here!" And if the foretastes of the blessings of Canaan, if the dark intimations of God's love to us be so unspeakably pleasant, so ravishingly delightful, O what will the full possession of Him be! What transporting ecstasies of love and joy shall those blessed souls be possessed with, who shall behold the King of glory smiling upon them, rejoicing over them, and shining forth in all His love and glory upon them! O what astonishing beauty will they then behold! What flowing, what refreshing pleasures shall then solace and delight their spirits unto all eternity! Pleasures far greater than I am able either to express or conceive, much less to enjoy, on this side Heaven. My faculties are now too narrow and scanty for such an entertainment; and therefore, till they are spiritualized and enlarged, they cannot receive it. This is the portion only of another world, this the "crown of

[Matt. 17.
4.]

righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge" reserves in Heaven for me, and which, at His second coming, He has promised to bestow upon me, and not upon me only, but "upon all them also that love His appearing."

[2Tim.4.8.]

As to the other state, viz. that of the wicked in another life, I believe it will be as exquisitely miserable and wretched as that of the righteous is happy and glorious: they will "be driven for ever from the presence of the Lord," from those bright and blessed regions above, "where Christ sits at the right hand of God," to those dark and dismal dungeons below, where the Devil and his angels are for ever doomed to be tormented.

[2 Thess. 1.
9.]
[Col. 3. 1.]

What sort of torments or punishments they are there to undergo, I am as unable to express as I am unwilling ever to experience; but according to the notions which Scripture and reason give me of these matters, I believe they will be twofold, viz. 1. Privative, and, 2. Positive; that is, the wicked will not only be deprived of all that is good and happy, but actually condemned to all that is evil and miserable, and that in the most transcendant degree.

The first part of their punishment will consist in envious, melancholy, and self-condemning reflections, upon their having defeated and deprived themselves, not only of their carnal mirth and sensual enjoyments, their friends, fortunes, and estates in this world, but also of all the infinite joys and glories of the next, the presence of God, the society of saints and angels, and all the refreshing and ravishing delights which flow from the fruition of the chiefest good: and what adds yet further to their anguish and remorse is, that they have lost the very hopes of ever regaining any of these enjoyments.

O how infinitely tormenting and vexatious must such a condition be, which at once gives them a view both of the greatest happiness and the greatest misery, without the least hopes either of recovering the one, or being delivered from the other! How must they tear, torment, and curse themselves for their former follies; and, too late, wish that they had been stifled in the womb, or drowned in the font which was to be their second birth!

And if the bare privation of Heaven and happiness be so

miserable and tormenting, how will it rack their consciences, and fill their souls with horror and amazement, to behold the eternal God, the glorious Jehovah, in the fierceness of His wrath, continually threatening to pour out His vengeance upon them ! How much more when He positively consigns them over to the power of the Devil, to execute His judgments in full measure ; when they are gnawed upon by the worm of their own consciences, feel the wrath of the Almighty flaming in their hearts, and fire and brimstone their continual torture ; and all this without the least alloy or mixture of refreshment, or the least hopes of ending or cessation : in a word, when they have nothing else to expect but misery for their portion, weeping and wailing for their constant employment, and the Devil and damned fiends their only companions to all eternity. And this is that world of misery which all that will not be persuaded to believe in Christ here must be doomed for ever to live in hereafter.

I know the subjects of this Article were never the objects of my sight, though they are of my faith. I never yet saw Heaven or Hell, the places I am now speaking of ; but why should my faith be staggered or diminished because of that ? I never saw Rome or Constantinople ; I never saw the flaming Sicilian hill *Ætna* ; yet I can believe there is such a burning mountain, and such glorious cities, because others who have been there have told me so ; and faithful writers have related and described them to me. And shall I believe my fellow-worms, and not my great Creator, Who is Truth itself ? What though I never did see the New Jerusalem that is above, nor the flaming Tophet that is below, yet since God Himself hath both related and described them to me, why should I doubt of them ? Why should not I a thousand times sooner believe them to be, than if I had seen them with mine own eyes ? I cannot so much believe that I have now a pen in my hand, have a book before me, and am writing in it, as I do and ought to believe, that I shall one day, and that ere long, be either in Heaven or in Hell ; in the height of happiness, or the depth of misery.

I know my senses are fallible, and therefore may deceive me ; but my God, I am sure, cannot. And therefore let

others raise doubts and scruples as they please, I am as fully satisfied and convinced of the truth of this Article as any of the rest.

Do Thou, O my God, keep me stedfast in this faith, and give me grace so to fit and prepare myself to appear before Thee in the white robes of purity and holiness in another world, that whenever my dissolution comes, I may cheerfully resign my spirit into the hands of my Creator and Redeemer ; and from this crazy house of clay take my flight into the mansions of glory, where Christ sits at the right hand of God ; and with the joyful choir of Saints and Angels, and the blessed spirits of just men made perfect, chant forth Thy praises to all eternity !

RESOLUTIONS

FORMED FROM

THE FOREGOING ARTICLES.

I. GENERAL RESOLUTIONS.

James 2. 26. As obedience without faith is impossible, so faith without obedience is vain and unprofitable: "For as the body," says St. James, "without the spirit is dead, so faith without good works is dead also." Having therefore, I hope, laid a sure foundation, by resolving what, and how, to believe, I shall now, by the grace of God, resolve so to order my conversation, in all circumstances and conditions of life, as to raise a good superstructure upon it, and to finish the work God has given me to do, that is, so to love and please God in this world as to enjoy and be happy with Him for ever in the next. And it is absolutely necessary that I should be speedy and serious in these resolutions; especially when I reflect with myself how much of my time I have already spent upon the vanities and follies of youth, and how much enhanced and increased this work by acquired guilt, by settled and repeated habits of sin, which are not, without great difficulty, to be atoned for and removed. My heart, alas! is now more hardened in iniquity, more puffed with pride, and more averse from God, than when I first entered into covenant with Him: and I have added many actual sins and provocations to my original guilt and pollution. Instead of glorifying God, I have dishonoured Him; and instead of working out my own Salvation, I have taken a pleasure and delight in such things as would, in the end, be my ruin and destruction. So that before I can be able to make any pro-

gress in the duties of religion, or walk in the paths that lead to life, I must first be freed and disentangled from those weights and encumbrances that clog and retard me in my spiritual course; I must have my heart cleansed and softened, humbled and converted to God, and all my transgressions purged and pardoned by the merits of my Redeemer. And then, being fully persuaded, that there is no way for me to come to the joys of Heaven but by walking according to the strictest rules of holiness upon earth, I must endeavour, for the future, by a thorough change and reformation of my life, to act in conformity to the Divine will and pleasure in all things, and “perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord:” for [2Cor. 7. 1.] the Most High has told me, in His Word, that “without [Heb. 12. 14.] holiness no man shall see the Lord.”

In order, therefore, to qualify myself for this happiness, it will be necessary for me to settle firm and steady resolutions, to fulfil my duty in all the several branches of it—to God, my neighbour, and myself; and to take care these resolutions be put in practice according to the following method.

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by rule, and therefore think it necessary to resolve upon rules to walk by.

AND this the rather, because I perceive the want of such rules has been the occasion of all or most of my miscarriages. For what other reason can I assign to myself for having trifled and sinned away so much time, as I have done in my younger years, but because I did not thoroughly resolve to spend it better? What is the reason I have hitherto lived so unserviceably to God, so unprofitably to others, and so sinfully against my own soul, but because I did not apply myself with that sincerity of resolution, diligence, and circumspection, as a wise man ought to have done, to discharge my duty in these particulars? I have, indeed, often resolved to bid adieu to my sins and follies, and enter upon a new course of life: but these resolutions

being not rightly formed upon steady principles, the first temptation made way for a relapse, and the same bait that first allured me has no sooner been thrown in my way, but I have been as ready to catch at it again, and as greedy to swallow it as ever. At other times again I have acted without any thought or resolution at all; and then, though some of my actions might be good in themselves, yet being done by chance, without any true design or intention, they could not be imputed to me as good, but rather the quite contrary: so that, in this respect, the want of resolution has not only been the occasion of my sinful actions, but the corruption of my good ones too. And shall I still go on in this same loose and careless manner as I have formerly done? No; I now resolve with myself, in the presence of the Most High and Eternal God, not only, in general, to walk by rule, but to fix the rule I design to walk by; so that in all my thoughts, and words, and actions, in all places, companies, relations, and conditions, I may still have a sure guide at hand to direct me, such a one as I can safely depend upon, without any danger of being deceived or misled, that is, the Holy Scriptures. And therefore,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make the Divine Word the rule of all the rules I propose to myself.

As the will of God is the rule and measure of all that is good, so there is nothing deserves that name but what is agreeable and conformable thereto; and this will being fully revealed and contained in the Holy Scripture, it will be necessary for me, in directing my course over the ocean of this world, that I should fix my eye continually upon this star, steer by this compass, and make it the only land-mark by which I am to be guided to my wished-for haven. I must not, therefore, have recourse to the inward workings of my own roving fancy, or the corrupt dictates of my own carnal reason; these are but blind guides, and will certainly lead me into the ditch of error, heresy, and irreligion, which, in these our self-admiring days, so many poor souls

have been plunged in. Alas ! how many hath the impetuous torrent of blind zeal and erroneous conscience borne down into a will-worship and voluntary subjection of themselves to the spurious offspring of their own deluded fancies ! If the light that is within them doth but dictate any thing to be done, or rather, if the whimsy doth but take them that they must do thus or thus, they presently set about it, without ever consulting the sacred writings, to see whether it is acceptable to God, or displeasing to Him. Whereas, for my own part, I know not how any thing should be worthy of God's accepting that is not of God's commanding. I am sure the Word of God is the good old way that will certainly bring me to my Father's house ; for how should that way but lead me to Heaven, which Truth itself hath chalked out for me ? Not as if it was necessary that every one of my resolutions should be contained, word for word, in the Holy Scriptures ; it is sufficient that they be implied in and agreeable thereto. So that though the manner of my expressions may not be found in the Word of God, yet the matter of my resolutions may clearly be drawn from thence. But let me dive a little into the depth of my sinful heart ; what is the reason of my thus resolving upon such an exact conformity to the Will and Word of God ? Is it to work my way to Heaven with mine own hands ? To purchase an inheritance in the land of Canaan, with the price of my own holiness and religion ? Or to swim over the ocean of this world, into the haven of happiness, upon the empty bladders of my own resolutions ? No,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, that as I am not able to think or do any thing that is good, without the influence of the Divine grace, so I will not pretend to merit any favour from God, upon account of any thing I do for His glory and service.

And, indeed, I may very well put this resolution amongst the rest ; for should I resolve to perform my resolutions by mine own strength, I might as well resolve never to perform them at all ; for truth itself, and my own woeful experience,

hath convinced me that I am not able of myself so much as to think a good thought: and how then shall I be able, of myself, to resolve upon rules of holiness, according to the word of God, or to order my conversation according to these resolutions, without the concurrence of the Divine grace? Alas! should the Great God be pleased to leave me to myself, to resolve upon what is agreeable to my corrupt nature, what strange kind of resolutions should I make! What should I resolve upon? Certainly upon nothing but to gratify my carnal appetite with sensual and sinful pleasures, to indulge myself in riot and excess, to spend my time and ravel out my parts and talents in the revels of sin and vanity.

[Tit. 2. 12.] But now to "live holily, righteously, and godlily in this present world," to deny my own, that I may fulfil the will of God; alas! such resolutions as these would never so much as come into my thoughts, much less would they discover themselves in my outward conversation.

But suppose I should be able to make good resolutions, and fulfil them exactly in my life and actions, yet what should I do more than my duty? And what should I be esteemed of for doing that? Alas! this is so far from puffing me up, that I am verily persuaded, should I spend all my time, my parts, my strength, my gifts for God, and all my estate upon the poor; should I water my couch continually with my tears, and fast my body into a skeleton; should I employ each moment of my life in the immediate worship of my glorious Creator, so that all my actions, from my birth to my death, should be but one continued act of holiness and obedience; in a word, should I live like an Angel in Heaven, and die like a Saint on earth, yet I know no truer, nor should I desire any better epitaph to be engraven upon my tomb than this, "Here lies an unprofitable servant." No, no, it is Christ, and Christ alone, that my soul must support itself upon. It is holiness, indeed, that is the way to Heaven, but there is none, none but Christ can lead me to it. As the worst of my sins are pardonable by Christ, so are the best of my duties damnable without Him.

But if so, then whither tend my resolutions? Why so strict, so circumspect a conversation? Why? It is to justify

that faith before others' and my own conscience, which, I hope, through Christ, shall justify my soul before God. And I believe further, that the holier I live here, the happier I shall live hereafter; for though I shall not be saved for my works, yet I believe I shall be saved according to them. And thus, as I dare not expect to be saved by the performance of my resolutions without Christ's merit; so neither do I ever expect to be enabled to perform my resolutions, without His Spirit assisting me therein.

No, it is Thyself, my God and my Guide, that I wholly and solely depend upon. Oh! for Thine Own Name's sake, for Thy Son's sake, and for Thy promise sake, do Thou both make me to know what Thou wouldst have me to do, and then help me to do what Thou wouldst have me to know: teach me first what to resolve upon, and then enable me to perform my resolutions, that I may walk with Thee in the ways of holiness here, and rest with Thee in the joys of happiness hereafter.

II. CONCERNING MY CONVERSATION IN GENERAL.

HAVING thus far determined, in general, to form resolutions for the better regulating of my life, I must now descend to particulars, and settle some rules with myself, to resolve my future life and conversation wholly into holiness and religion. I know this is a hard task to do, but I am sure it is no more than what my God and my Father hath set me; why, therefore, should I think much to do it? Shall I grudge to spend my life for Him, Who did not grudge to spend His Own blood for me? Shall not I so live that He may be glorified on earth, Who died that I might be glorified in Heaven? Especially considering, that if my whole life could be sublimated into holiness, and moulded into an exact conformity unto the will of the Most High, I should be happy beyond expression. O what a heaven should I then live on earth! What ravishments of love and joy would my soul be continually possessed with! Well, I am

resolved, by the grace of God, to try. And to that end do, this morning, wholly sequester and set myself apart for God, resolving, by the assistance of His grace, to make all and every thought, word, and action, to pay their tribute unto Him. Let this man mind his profit, a second his pleasures, a third his honours, a fourth himself, and all their sins, I am resolved to mind and serve my God, so as to make Him the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, of my whole life; and that I may always have an exact copy before me to write and frame every letter of this my life by,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to make Christ the Pattern of my life here, that so Christ may be the Portion of my soul hereafter.

Let the whole world go whither it will, I am resolved to walk in the steps that my Saviour went in before me: I shall endeavour, in all places I come into, in all companies I converse with, in all the duties I undertake, in all the miseries I undergo, still to behave myself as my Saviour would do was He in my place. So that wheresoever I am, or whatsoever I am about, I shall still put this question to myself, Would my Saviour go hither? Would He do this or that? And every morning consider with myself, Suppose my Saviour was in my stead, had my business to do, how would He demean Himself this day? How meek and lowly would He be in His carriage and deportment! How circumspect in His walking! How savoury in His discourse! How heavenly in all, even His earthly employments! Well, and I am resolved, by strength from Himself, to follow Him as near as possible. I know I can never hope perfectly to transcribe His copy, but I must endeavour to imitate it in the best manner I can, that so, by doing as He did in time, I may be where He is to all eternity. But, alas! His life was spiritual, and "I am carnal, sold under sin," and every petty object that doth but please my senses will be apt to divert and draw away my soul from following His steps. In order, therefore, to prevent this,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to walk by faith, and not by sight, on earth, that so I may live by sight, and not by faith, in Heaven.

And truly this resolution is so necessary to the performance of all the rest, that without it I can do nothing; with it I can do every thing that is required. The reason why I am so much taken with the garnish and seeming beauty of this world's vanities, so as to step out of the road of holiness, to catch at, or delight myself in them, is only because I look upon them with an eye of sense; for could I behold every thing with the eye of faith, I should judge of them, not as they seem to me, but as they are in themselves, "vanity and vexation of spirit." For faith has a quick and piercing eye, that can look through the outward superficialities into the inward essence of things. It can look through the pleasing bait to the hidden hook, view the sting as well as the honey, the everlasting punishment as well as the temporal contentment, there is in sin. It is, as the Apostle very well defines it, "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." It is, "the substance" of whatsoever is promised by God to me, or expected by me from Him: so that by faith whatsoever I hope for in Heaven, I may have the substance of upon earth: and it is "the evidence of things not seen," the presence of what is absent, the clear demonstration of what would otherwise seem impossible; so that I can clearly discern, as through a prospective, hidden things, and things afar off, as if they were open and just at hand. I can look into the deepest mysteries, as fully revealed, and see Heaven and eternity as just ready to receive me. And O! could I but always look through this glass, and be constantly upon the mount, taking a view of the land of Canaan, what dreams and shadows would all things here below appear to be! Well, by the grace of God, I am resolved no longer to tie myself to sense and sight, the sordid and trifling affairs of this life, but always to walk as one of the other world, to behave

[Eccles. 1. 14.]

Heb. 11. 1.

myself in all places, and at all times, as one already possessed of my inheritance, and an inhabitant of the New Jerusalem! by faith assuring myself I have but a few more days to live below, a little more work to do; and then I shall lay aside my glass, and be admitted to a nearer vision and fruition of God, and “see Him face to face.”

[1 Cor. 13.
12.]

By this means I shall always live as if I was daily to die; always speak as if my tongue the next moment were to cleave to the roof of my mouth; and continually order my thoughts and affections in such a manner as if my soul were just ready to depart, and take its flight into the other world. By this means, whatsoever place I am in, or whatsoever work I am about, I shall still be with my God, and demean myself so, as if, with St. Jerome, I heard the voice of the trumpet crying out, “Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment!”

And thus, though I am at present here in the flesh, yet I shall look upon myself as more really an inhabitant of Heaven than I am upon earth. Here I am but as a pilgrim or sojourner that has no abiding city; but there I have a sure and everlasting inheritance, which Christ has purchased and prepared for me, and which faith has given me the possession of. And therefore, as it is my duty, so will I constantly make it my endeavour, to live up to the character of a true Christian, whose portion and conversation are in Heaven, and think it a disgrace and disparagement to my profession, to stoop to, or entangle myself with such toys and trifles as the men of the world busy themselves about, or to feed upon husks with swine here below, when it is in my power, by faith, to be continually supplied with spiritual manna from Heaven, till at last I am admitted to it. And that I may awe my spirit into the performance of these and all other my resolutions,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to be looking upon God as always looking upon me.

Wheresoever I am, or whatsoever I am a-doing, I must still consider the eye of the Great God as directly intent upon me, viewing and observing all my thoughts, words,

and actions, and writing them down in the book of His remembrance; and that all these, unless they be washed out with the tears of repentance, and crossed with the blood of my crucified Saviour, must still remain on record, and be brought in judgment against me at the great day. That therefore I may always behave myself as in His presence, it behoves me thoroughly to consider and be persuaded, not only that my outward man, but even all the secret thoughts, the inward motions and retirements of my soul, all the several windings and turnings of my heart, are exactly known and manifest, as anatomized before Him. He knows what I am now a-thinking, doing, and writing, as well as I do myself; yea, He sees every word whilst it is in my heart, before it be brought forth and set down. He knows all the resolutions I have made, and how often, poor creature! I have broken them already since I made them.

Upon this consideration, I resolve to stand my ground against all temptations, and whenever I find myself in danger to be drawn aside by them, to oppose the bent of my corrupt affections, by these or the like questions: Am I really in the presence of the Almighty, the great Lord of Heaven and earth, and shall I presume to affront Him to His face, by doing such things as I know are odious and displeasing to Him? I would not commit adultery in the presence of my fellow-creatures, and shall I do it in the presence of the glorious Jehovah? I would not steal in the sight of an earthly judge, and shall I do it before the Judge of all the world? If fear and shame from men have such an influence upon me, as to deter me from the commission of sin, how ought I to be moved with the apprehension of God's inspection, Who does not only know my transgressions, but will eternally punish me for them? May these thoughts and considerations always take place in my heart, and be accompanied with such happy effects in my conversation, that I may live with God upon earth, and so love and fear His presence in this world, that I may for ever enjoy His glory in the next!

III. CONCERNING MY THOUGHTS.

BUT who am I, poor proud and sinful dust and ashes, that I should expect ever to live so holy, so heavenly, as is here supposed! “Can grapes be gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles?” Can the fruit be sweet when the root is bitter? or the streams healthful when the fountain is poisoned? No, I must either get me a new and better heart, or else it will be impossible for me ever to lead a new and better life. But how must I come by this pearl of inestimable value, a new heart? Can I purchase it with my own riches? or find it in my own field? Can I raise it from sin to holiness? from earth to Heaven? or from myself to God? Alas! I have endeavoured it, but I find by woeful experience I cannot attain to it: I have been lifting and heaving again and again, to raise it out of the mire and clay of sin and corruption, but, alas! it will not stir: I have rubbed and chafed it with one threatening after another, and all to get heat and life into it, but still it is as cold and dead as ever. I have brought it to the promises, and set it under the droppings of the sanctuary; I have shewn it the beauty of Christ, and the deformity of sin; but yet it is a hard and sinful, an earthly and sensual heart still. What therefore shall I do with it? O my God, I bring it unto Thee, Thou that madest it a heart at first, canst only make it a new heart now! O do Thou purify and refine it, and “renew a right spirit within me!” Do Thou take it into Thy hands, and out of Thine infinite goodness new-mould it up, by Thine Own grace, into an exact conformity to Thine Own will. Do Thou but give me a new heart, and I shall promise Thee, by Thy grace, to lead a new life, and become a new creature. Do Thou but clear the fountain, and I shall endeavour to look to the streams that flow from it; which that I may be able to do with the better success,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to watch as much over the inward motions of my heart as the outward actions of my life.

For my heart, I perceive, is the womb in which all sin is

first conceived, and from which, my Saviour tells me, “pro-^{Mark 7. 21, 22.}ceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.” So that, as ever I would prevent the commission of these sins in my life, I must endeavour to hinder their conception in my heart, following the wise man’s counsel, to “keep my heart with all diligence,^{Prov. 4. 23.} because out of it are the issues of life.” Neither is this the only reason why I should set so strict a watch over my heart, because sinful thoughts lead to sinful acts, but because the thoughts themselves are sinful, yea, the very first-born of iniquity; which though men cannot pry into or discover, yet the all-seeing God knows and observes and remembers them, as well as the greatest actions of my life. And O! what wicked and profane thoughts have I formerly entertained not only against God, but against Christ, by questioning the justice of His laws, and doubting of the truth of His Revelation, so as to make both His life and death of none effect to me: which, that they may never be laid to my charge hereafter, I humbly beseech God to pardon and absolve me from them, and to give me grace for the remainder of my life, to be as careful of thinking as of doing well, and as fearful of offending Him in my heart, as of transgressing His laws in my life and conversation. To this end,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to stop every thought at its first entering into my heart, and to examine it whence it comes and whither it tends.

So soon as ever any new thought begins to bubble up in my soul, I am resolved to examine what stamp it is of, whether it spring from the pure fountain of living waters, or the polluted streams of my own affections; as also which way it tends or takes its course, towards the ocean of happiness, or the pit of destruction. And the reason of this my resolution, I draw from the experience I have had of the Devil’s temptations, and the working of my own corruptions;

by which I find that there is no sin I am betrayed into but what takes its rise from my inward thoughts. These are the tempters that first present some pleasing object to my view, and then bias my understanding, and pervert my will, to comply with the suggestions. So that though the Spirit of God is pleased to dart a beam into my heart at the same time, and shew me the odious and dangerous effects of such thoughts, yet, I know not how or why, I find a prevailing suggestion within, that tells me it is but a thought, and that so long as it goes no further, it cannot do me much hurt. Under this specious colour and pretence, I secretly persuade myself to dwell a little longer upon it : and finding my heart pleased and delighted with its natural issue, I give it a little further indulgence, till at last my desire breaks out into a flame, and will be satisfied with nothing less than the enjoyment of the object it is exercised upon. And what water can quench such a raging fire as is thus kindled by the Devil, and blown up by the bellows of my own inordinate affections, which the more I think of, the more I increase the flame? How nearly, therefore, does it concern me to take up this resolution of setting a constant watch and guard at the door of my heart, that nothing may enter in without a strict examination! Not as if I could examine every particular thought that arises in my heart, for by that means I should do nothing else but examine my thoughts without intermission. But this I must do, whensoever I find any thought that bears the face or appearance of sin, I must throw it aside with the utmost abhorrence : and when it comes in disguise, as the Devil under Samuel's mantle, or when it is a thought I never conceived before, and know not but it may be bad as well as good ; then, before I suffer it to settle upon my spirits, I must examine, as well as I can, whether it be sent from Heaven or Hell, and what message it comes about, and what will be the issue of it. And thus, by the Divine assistance, I shall let nothing into my heart but what will bring me nearer to my God, and set me at a greater distance from the evil and punishment of sin. Neither do I think it my duty only to be so watchful against such thoughts as are in themselves sinful, but,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as fearful to let in vain, as careful to keep out sinful, thoughts.

I do not look upon vain thoughts as only tending to sin, but as in themselves sinful: for that which makes sin to be sin, is the want of conformity to the will of God; and that vain thoughts are not conformable and agreeable to the Divine will, appears in that God Himself, by the mouth of His royal Prophet, expressly saith, "I hate vain thoughts." Ps. 119. 113. Again, vain thoughts are therefore sinful, because they have in them nothing that can denominate them good: for as, in a moral sense, there is never a particular individual act, so neither is there any particular thought, but what is either good or bad, in some respect or other. There is not a moment of my life but it is my duty either to be thinking, or speaking, or doing good; so that whensoever I am not thus employed, I come short of my duty, and, by consequence, am guilty of sin.

But what are these vain thoughts I am thus resolving against? Why, all wanderings and distractions in prayer, or in hearing the Word of God: all useless, trifling, and impertinent thoughts, that do not belong to, nor further the work I am about, the grand affair of my Salvation, may properly be called 'vain thoughts.' And, alas! what swarms of these are continually crowding into my heart! How have I thought away whole hours together, about I know not what chimeras, whereof one scarce ever depends upon another; sometimes entertaining myself with the pleasures of sense, as eating and drinking, and suchlike earthly enjoyments, sometimes building castles in the air, and clambering up to the pinnacle of wealth and honour, which I am not half way got up to, but down I fall again into a fool's paradise.

Or if I chance at any time to think a good while upon one thing, it is just to as much purpose as the man's thoughts were which I have sometimes heard of, and smiled at, who having an egg in his hand, by a sort of chimerical climax,

improved it into an estate ; but while he was thus pleasing himself with these imaginary products, down dropt the egg, and all his hens, and cattle, and house, and land, that he had raised from it, vanished in the fall. These, and such-like, are the vain thoughts that I must for the future endeavour to avoid ; and though it will be impossible for me wholly to prevent their first entering into my mind, yet I resolve, by the grace of God, not to harbour or dwell upon, or delight myself in them. And then, notwithstanding they are in some sense sinful, yet they will not be imputed to me as such, provided I use my utmost endeavours to avoid them : which that I may be the better able to do,

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be always exercising my thoughts upon good objects, that the Devil may not exercise them upon bad.

The soul being a spiritual substance, is always in action, and its proper and immediate act is thinking, which is as natural and proper to the soul as extension is to the body : it is that upon which all the other actings of the soul are grounded ; so that neither our apprehensions of, nor affections to, any object can be acted without it. And hence it is that I think the soul is very properly defined *substantia cogitans*, ‘a thinking substance ;’ for there is nothing else but a spirit can think, and there is no spirit but always doth think. And this I find by experience to be so true and certain, that if at any time I have endeavoured to think of nothing, (as I have sometimes done,) I have spent all the time in thinking upon that very thought. How much, therefore, doth it concern me to keep my soul in continual exercise upon what is good : for, be sure, if I do not set it on work, the Devil will ; and if it do not work for God, it will work for him : I know sinful objects are more agreeable to a sinful soul ; but I am sure holy thoughts are more conformable to a holy God. Why, therefore, should I spend and ravel out my thoughts upon that which will destroy my soul ? No, no ; I shall henceforth endeavour always to be

employing my thoughts upon something that is good ; and therefore to have good subjects constantly at hand to think upon, (as the attributes of God, the glory of Heaven, the misery of Hell, the merits of Christ, the corruption of my nature, the sinfulness of sin, the beauty of holiness, the vanity of the world, the immortality of the soul, and the like,) and likewise to take occasion, from the objects I meet or converse with in the world, to make such remarks and reflections as may be for my advantage and improvement in my spiritual affairs. For there is nothing in the world, though it be never so bad, but what I may exercise good thoughts upon : and my neglect in this kind has been the real occasion of all those vain thoughts that have hitherto possessed my soul. I have not kept them close to their work, to think upon what is good ; and therefore they have run out into those extravagancies, which, by the blessing of God, in the performance of these resolutions, I shall endeavour to avoid.

It is indeed a singular advantage of that high and Heavenly calling in which the Most High, of His wisdom and goodness, has been pleased to place me, that all the objects we converse with, and all the subjects we exercise our thoughts upon, are either God and Heaven, or something relating to them. So that we need not go out of our common road to meet with this Heavenly company good thoughts. But then I do not account every thought of God or Heaven, which only swims in my brain, to be a good and holy thought, unless it sinks down into my heart and affections, that is, unless to my meditations of God and another world I join a longing for Him, a rejoicing in Him, and a solacing myself in the hopes of a future enjoyment of Him. Neither will this be any hinderance, but a furtherance to my studies ; for as I know no Divine truths as I ought, unless I know them practically and experimentally, so I never think I have any clear apprehensions of God, until I find my affections are inflamed towards Him ; or that I ever understand any Divine truth aright, until my heart be brought into subjection to it.

This resolution, therefore, extends itself not only to the subject-matter of my thoughts, but also to the quality of

them, with regard to practice, that they may influence my life and conversation, that whether I speak, or write, or eat, or drink, or whatsoever I do, I may still season all, even my commonest actions, with Heavenly meditations; there being nothing I can set my hand to, but I may likewise set my heart a-working upon it. Which accordingly I shall endeavour, by the blessing of God, to do. And for the better ordering of my thoughts,

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to marshal my thoughts, that they may not one jostle out another, nor any of them prejudice the business I am about.

My soul being by nature swift and nimble, and by corruption inordinate and irregular in its operations, I can never set myself to think upon one thing, but presently another presses in, and another after that, and so on, till by thinking of so many things at once, I can think upon nothing to any purpose. And hence it is that I throw away thousands of thoughts each day for nothing, which, if well managed, might prove very profitable and advantageous to me. To prevent, therefore, this tumultuous, desultory, and useless working of my thoughts, as I have already resolved to fix and settle my heart upon necessary, and useful, and good objects, so as to prevent my thoughts rolling from one thing to another, or leaping from the top of one to the height of another object, I must now endeavour to rank and digest them into order and method, that they may for the future be more steady and regular in their pursuits. I know the Devil and my own corrupt nature will labour to break the ranks, and confound the order of them; what stratagem, therefore, shall I use to prevent this confusion? I shall endeavour, by the grace of God, whensoever I find any idle thoughts begin to frisk and rove out of the way, to call them in again, and set them to work upon one or other of these objects before mentioned, and to keep them for some time fixed and intent upon it; and, considering the relations and dependencies of one thing upon another, not to suffer any foreign ideas, such, I mean, as are impertinent to the chain

of thoughts I am upon, to jostle them out, or to divert my mind another way. No, not though they be otherwise good thoughts; for thoughts in themselves good, when they crowd in unseasonably, are sometimes attended with very ill effects, by interrupting and preventing some good purposes and resolutions, which might prove more effectual for promoting God's glory, the good of others, and the comfort of our own souls.

These, and suchlike, are the methods by which I design and resolve to regulate my thoughts: and since I can do nothing without the Divine assistance, I earnestly beg of God to give me such a measure of His grace, as may enable me effectually to put these resolutions in practice, that I may not think and resolve in vain.

IV. CONCERNING MY AFFECTIONS.

BUT whilst I am thus ranging my thoughts, I find something of a passion or inclination within me, either drawing me to, or driving me from, every thing I think on; so that I cannot so much as think upon a thought, but it is either pleasing or displeasing to me, according to the agreeableness or disagreeableness of the object it is placed upon, to my natural affections. If it comes under the pleasing dress and appearance of good, I readily choose and embrace it: if otherwise, I am as eagerly bent to refuse and reject it. And these two acts of the will are naturally founded in those two reigning passions of the soul, love and hatred, which I cannot but look upon as the grounds of all its other motions and affections. For what are those other passions of desire, hope, joy, and the like, but love in its several postures? And what else can we conceive of fear, grief, abhorrence, &c. but so many different expressions of hatred, according to the several circumstances that the displeasing object appears to be under? Doth my understanding represent any thing to my will under the notion of good and pleasant? my will is presently taken and delighted with it, and so places its love upon it; and this love, if the object be present, inclines

me to embrace it with joy; if absent, it puts forth itself into desire; if easy to be attained, it comforts itself with hope; if difficult, it arms itself with courage; if impossible, it boils up into anger; if obstructed, it presently falls down into despair. On the other hand, doth my understanding represent any object to my will as evil, or painful, or deformed? How doth it immediately shrink and gather up itself into a loathing and hatred of it! and this hatred, if the ungrateful object be present, puts on the mournful sables of grief and sorrow; if it be at any distance from it, it boils up into detestation and abhorrence; if ready to fall upon it, it shakes for fear; if difficult to be prevented, it strengthens itself with courage and magnanimity, either to conquer or undergo it. These affections, therefore, being thus the constant attendants of my thoughts, it behoves me as much to look to those as to the other; especially when I consider, that not only my thoughts, but even my actions too, are generally determined to good or bad, accordingly as they are influenced by them. That my affections, therefore, as well as my thoughts, may be duly regulated,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my affections subservient to the dictates of my understanding, that my reason may not follow, but guide my affections.

The affections being of themselves blind and inordinate, unless they are directed by reason and judgment, they either move toward a wrong object, or pursue the right in a wrong way. And this judgment must be mature and deliberate, such as arises from a clear apprehension of the nature of the object that affects me, and a thorough consideration of the several circumstances that attend it. And great care must be taken that I do not impose upon myself by fancy and imagination, that I do not mistake fancy for judgment, or the capricious humours of my roving imagination for the solid dictates of a well-guided reason: for my fancy is as wild as my affections, and if “the blind lead the blind, they will both fall into the ditch.” And, alas! how oft am I deceived in this manner! If I do but fancy a thing

good and lovely, how eager are my affections in the pursuit of it! If I do but fancy any thing evil and hurtful to me, how doth my heart presently rise up against it, or grieve and sorrow for it! And this, I believe, hath been the occasion of all the enormities and extravagancies I have been guilty of, through the whole course of my past life, divesting me of my reasonable faculties, as to the acts and exercises of them, and subjecting my soul to the powers of sense, that I could not raise my affections above them. Thus, for instance, I have not loved grace, because my fancy could not see its beauty; I have not loathed sin, because my fancy could not comprehend its misery; and I have not truly desired Heaven, because my fancy could not reach its glory: whereas, if the transient beauty and lustre of this world's vanities were but presented to my view, how has my fancy mounted up to the highest pitch of pleasure and ambition, and inflamed my heart with the desire of them!

And thus, poor wretch! have I been carried about with the powerful charms of sense, without having any other guide of my affections but what is common to the very brutes that perish; fancy supplying that place in the sensitive, which reason does in the rational soul. And, alas! what is this but, with Nebuchadnezzar, to leave communion with men, and herd myself with the flocks of the beasts of the field? And what a shame and reproach is this to the image of God, in which I was created! Oh! Thou that art the Author of my nature, help me, I beseech Thee, to act more conformably to it for the time to come, that I may no longer be bewildered or misled by the blind conduct of my straggling fancy, this 'ignis fatuus,' that hurries me over bogs and precipices to the pit of destruction; but that I may bring all my affections and actions to the standard of a clear and sound judgment, and let that judgment be guided by the unerring light of Thy Divine word, that so I may neither love, desire, fear, nor detest any thing, but what my judgment, thus formed, tells me I ought to do.

I know it will be very hard thus to subject my affections to the dictates and commands of my judgment: but howsoever, it is my resolution this morning, in the presence of Almighty God, to endeavour it, and never to suffer my heart to settle its affections upon any object, till my judgment

hath passed its sentence upon it. And as I will not suffer my affections to run before my judgment, so, whenever that is determined, I steadfastly resolve to follow it; that so, my apprehensions and affections always going together, I may be sure to walk in the direct path of God's Commandments, and enter the gate that leads to everlasting life. And the better to facilitate the performance of this general resolution, it being necessary to descend to particulars,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to love God as the best of goods, and to hate sin as the worst of evils.

As God is the centre of our concupiscible affections, so sin is the object of those we call irascible: and the affections of love and hatred being the ground of all the rest, I must have a great care that I do not mistake or miscarry in them: for if these be placed upon wrong objects, it is impossible any of the rest should be placed upon right ones. In order, therefore, to prevent such a miscarriage, as God is the greatest good, and sin the greatest evil, I resolve to love God above all things else in the world, and to hate sin to the same degree; and so to love other things only in relation to God, and to hate nothing but in reference to sin.

As for the first, the loving God above all things, there is nothing seems more reasonable; inasmuch as there is nothing lovely in any creature but what it receives from God; and by how much the more it is like to God, by so much the more it is lovely unto us. Hence it is, that beauty, or an exact symmetry and proportion of parts and colours, so attracts our love, because it so much resembles God, Who is beauty and perfection itself. And hence it is, likewise, that grace is the most lovely thing in the world, next to God, as being the image of God Himself stamped upon the soul; nay, it is not only the image and representation, but it is the influence and communication of Himself to us; so that the more we have of grace, we may safely say so much the more we have of God within us. Why, therefore, should I grudge my love to Him, Who only deserves it; Who is not only infinitely lovely in Himself, but the Author and Perfection

of all loveliness in His creatures? Why? The true reason is, that my affections have run a-gadding without my judgment, or else my judgment hath been balked or anticipated by my fancy; whereas now that my apprehensions of God are a little cleared up, and my judgment leads the way, though nobody sees me, yet, methinks, I cannot but blush at myself that I should ever lie doting upon these dreams and shadows here below, and not fix my affections upon the infinite beauty and all-sufficiency of God above, Who deserves my love and admiration so infinitely beyond them. Howsoever, therefore, I have heretofore placed my affections upon other things above God, I am now resolved to love God, not only above many or most things, but above all things else in the world.

And here, by loving God, I do not understand that sensitive affection I place upon material objects; for it is impossible that that should be fixed upon God, Who is a pure spiritual Being: but that as by the deliberate choice of my will I take Him for my chiefest good, so I ought to prefer Him as such before my nearest and dearest possessions, interests, or relations, and whatsoever else may at any time stand in competition with Him.

And thus, as I shall endeavour to love God, so likewise to hate sin above all things: and this is as necessary as the former, for all things else have something of good in them, as they are made by God; but sin being in its own nature a privation of good, and directly opposite to the nature and will of God, (as I have before shewn,) it has nothing of beauty or amiableness to recommend it to my affections. On the contrary, it is a compound of deformity and defilement, that is always attended with punishment and misery, and must therefore be the object of my hatred and abhorrence, wheresoever I find it. For as God is the centre of all that is good, so is sin the fountain of all the evil in the world. All the strife and contention, ignominy and disgrace, misfortunes and afflictions, that I observe in the world; all the diseases of my body, and infirmities of my mind; all the errors of my understanding, and irregularities of my will and affections; in a word, all the evils whatsoever that I am affected with or subject to in this world, are still the fruits

and effects of sin : for if man had never offended the chiefest good, he had never been subject to that train of evils which attended his transgression. Whensoever, therefore, I find myself begin to detest and abhor any evil, I shall for the future endeavour to turn my eyes to the spring-head, and loathe and detest the fountain that sends forth all those bitter and unwholesome streams, as well as the channels of those corrupt hearts in which they flow. And for this reason I resolve to hate sin wheresoever I find it, whether in myself or in others, in the best of friends as well as the worst of enemies. Love, I know, and “charity covers a multitude of sins,” and where we love the man, we are all of us but too apt to overlook or excuse his faults. For the prevention of this, therefore, I firmly resolve, in all my expressions of love to my fellow-creatures, so to love the person as yet to hate his sins ; and so to hate his sins as yet to love his person. The last of which, I hope, I shall not find hard to practise, my nature, by the blessing of God, being not easily inclined to hate any man’s person whatsoever ; and the former will not be much more difficult, when I consider that by how much I love my friend, by so much more should I hate whatsoever will be offensive or destructive to him.

Having thus fixed my resolutions with regard to those two commanding passions of my soul, love and hatred,

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the assistance of Divine grace, to make God the principal object of my joy, and sin the principal object of my grief and sorrow ; so as to grieve for sin more than suffering, and for suffering only for sin’s sake.

The affections of joy and grief are the immediate issues of love and hatred, and therefore not at all to be separated in their object. Having, therefore, resolved to love, I cannot but resolve likewise to rejoice in God above all things ; for the same measure of love I have towards any thing, the same measure of complacency and delight I must necessarily have in the enjoyment of it. As, therefore, I love God above all things, and other things only in subserviency to Him, so must I rejoice in God above all things, and in other

things only as coming from Him. I know I not only may but must rejoice in the mercies and blessings that God confers upon me; but it is still my duty to rejoice more in what God is in Himself, than in what He is pleased to communicate to me: so that I am not only bound to rejoice in God, when I have nothing else, but when I have all things else to rejoice in. Let, therefore, my riches, honours, or my friends, fail me; let my pleasures, my health, and hope, and all, fail me, I am still resolved, by His grace, to rejoice in the Lord, and to joy in the God of my Salvation. On the other hand, let honour or riches be multiplied upon me; let joy and pleasure, and all that a carnal heart (like mine) can wish for or desire, be thrown upon me, yet am I still resolved, that as it is my business to serve God, so shall it be my delight and comfort to rejoice in Him.

And as God shall thus be my chiefest joy, so shall sin be my greatest grief; for I account no condition miserable, but that which results from, or leads me unto sin: so that when any thing befalls me which may bear the face of suffering, and fill my heart with sorrow, I shall still endeavour to keep off the smart, till I know from whence it comes. If sin has kindled the fire of God's wrath against me, and brought these judgments upon me, oh! what a heavy load shall I then feel upon my soul! And how shall I groan and complain under the burden of it! But if there be nothing of the poison of sin dropped into this cup of sorrows, though it may perhaps prove bitter to my senses, yet it will, in the end, prove healthful to my soul; as being not kindled at the furnace of God's wrath, but at the flames of His love and affection for me. So that I am so far from having cause to be sorry for the sufferings He brings upon me, that I have much greater cause to rejoice in them, as being an argument of the love and affection He bears to me; "For whom the Lord loveth He Heb. 12. 6. chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

And having thus resolved to rejoice in nothing but God, and grieve for nothing but sin, I must not be cast down and dejected at every providence which the men here below count a loss or affliction; for certainly all the misery I find in any thing extrinsical is created by myself; nothing but what is in me being properly an affliction to me, so that it is

my fancy that is the ground of misery in all things without myself. If I did not fancy some evil or misery in the loss of such an enjoyment, it would be no misery at all to me; because I am still the same as I was, and have as much as I had before. For it is God that is the portion of my soul; and, therefore, should I lose every thing I have in the world besides, yet, having God, I cannot be said to lose any thing, because I have Him that hath, and is, all things in Himself. Whensoever, therefore, any thing befalls me that uses to be matter of sorrow and dejection to me, I must not presently be affected with, nor dejected at it, but still behave myself like an heir of Heaven, and, living above the smiles and frowns of this world, account nothing matter of joy, but so far as I enjoy of God's love, nor any thing matter of sorrow, but so much as I see of His anger in it.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to desire spiritual mercies more than temporal, and temporal mercies only in reference to spiritual.

Having rectified the balance of my judgment according to Scripture, when I would begin to weigh temporal things with spiritual, I find there is no proportion, and so no comparison to be made betwixt them. And will any wise man, then, that pretends to reason, be at a stand which of these to choose, which to esteem the best, or desire most? Alas! what is there in the world that can fill the vast desires of my soul, but only He Who is infinitely above me and my desires too? Will riches do it? No; I may as soon undertake to fill my barns with grace, as my heart with gold, and as easily stuff my bags with virtue, as ever satisfy my desires with wealth. Do I hunt after pleasures? These may, indeed, charm and delight my brutish senses, but can never be agreeable or proportionate to my spiritual faculties. Do I grasp at honour and popularity? These, again, are as empty and unsatisfying as the former; they may make me look high and great in the eye of the world, turn my head giddy with applause, or puff up my heart with pride, but they can

never fill up the measure of its desires. And thus, if I should have the whole world at my command, and could, with Alexander, wield both sword and sceptre over all the nations and languages of it, would this content me? or rather, should I not sit down and weep with him, that I had not another world to conquer and possess? Whereas God, being an infinite good, it is impossible for me to desire any thing which I may not enjoy in Him and His mercies: let me, or any other creature, extend our desires never so far, still the graces and blessings of this infinite God will be infinitely beyond them all: insomuch that though ten thousand worlds are not able to satisfy one soul, yet one God is able to satisfy ten thousand souls; yea, and ten millions more to them, as well as if there was only one soul in all the world to satisfy.

Come, therefore, my dear Lord and Saviour, whilst Thy servant is breathing after Thee, and possess my heart with the spiritual blessings of grace and faith, peace and charity; and let none of these empty and transient delights of this world stand in competition with them. Thou art the source and centre of all my wishes and desires; even "as the hart [Ps. 42. 1.] panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God." Oh! when shall I appear in Thy presence? When, when shall that blessed time come, that I shall see Thy sacred Majesty face to face? This is a mercy, I confess, which I cannot expect whilst imprisoned in the body; but howsoever, though I must not yet appear before Thee, do Thou vouchsafe to appear in me, and give me such glimpses of Thy love and graces here, as may be an earnest of the bliss and glory I am to enjoy hereafter.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to hope for nothing so much as the promises, and to fear nothing so much as the threatenings, of God.

My soul being inflaméd with holy desires after God, my heart cannot but be big with the hopes and expectations of Him: and, truly, as there is nothing that I can absolutely

desire, so neither is there any thing that I can assuredly hope for and depend upon, but God Himself, and the promises He has made to me in His Divine Word. For as all things derive their being and subsistence from Him, so they are all at His beck and command, and are acted and influenced as His wisdom and pleasure sees fit to order them. All the secondary causes are in His hand, and He turns them which way so ever He will ; so that however improbable and disproportionate the means He uses may appear to be, He never fails to accomplish the end, or whatever He wills and decrees to be done. And therefore wherever I meet with any promises made over to the faithful in His sacred word, (since they are the promises of One Who is infinitely just and true, Who can neither dissemble nor deceive,) I cannot in the least doubt but they will be punctually fulfilled ; and if I am of that happy number, (as I trust, through the merits of Christ, and my own sincere endeavours, I shall approve myself to be,) I have as much assurance of being partaker of them, as if I had them actually in possession, or as any of the faithful servants of God, who have already experienced the accomplishment of them.

But suppose God should not favour me with the bright part of His promises, but, instead of the blessings of health and prosperity, should visit me with crosses and afflictions: yet I have still the same grounds for my hope and confidence in Him, and may say with the Psalmist, “ The Lord is my Helper ; I will not fear what” the devil or “ man shall do unto me.” For though their spite and malice may sometimes cross, afflict, and persecute me, yet since I am assured they are only as instruments in the hand of God, that cannot go beyond their commission, nor make me suffer more than I am able to bear, I may comfort myself under all these afflictions by the same Divine promise that St. Paul had recourse to on the like occasion, to wit, “ That all shall work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.” The Devil could not touch the possessions of Job, till he had received a commission from God ; nor could he come near his body till that commission was renewed ; and so neither can he, or any creature whatsoever, throw any evil upon me, without the

[Heb. 14.
6.]

Rom. 8. 28.

Divine permission; and even that, though it seems to be evil, shall really, in the end, turn to my benefit and advantage. Oh! what a sovereign antidote is this against all despondency and despair, even under the deepest and severest trials! Permit me, O my God! to apply this sacred promise to myself, and say, I am assured of it by my own experience. For I can hardly remember any one thing that ever happened to me, in the whole course of my life, even to the crossing of my most earnest desires and highest expectations, but what I must confess, to the praise of Thy grace and goodness, has really, in the end, turned to my advantage another way. Oh! make me truly sensible of all Thy promises to, and dealings with me, that whatever storms and surges may arise in the tempestuous ocean of this transient world, I may still fix the anchor of my hope and happiness in Thee, Who art the source and spring of all blessings, and without Whom no evil or calamity could ever befall me.

And as the promises of God, upon all these accounts, are to be the object of my hope; so are His threatenings to be of my fear and aversion: as the former are of excellent use to raise and revive the most drooping hearts, so the latter are of weight enough to sink and depress the stoutest and most undaunted spirits, and make them lick up the dust of horror and despair. Not to mention any thing of the exquisite and eternal miseries denounced against the wicked in the next world, with which the Scriptures every where abound, there is one punishment threatened to be inflicted here, which is, of itself, sufficient to do this; and that is in Mal. ii. 2: "If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory to My Name, saith the Lord of Hosts, I will even send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings." Most dreadful sentence, which none that consider aright can be able to read without trembling and astonishment. Alas! if God should curse me, where should I seek for blessing, since He is the only Fountain from which it flows, and by which it is conveyed and communicated to me? And if He should curse my very blessings, what could I hope for but misery and despair? My health, my wealth, my preferments, my relations, nay, my very life itself, would all be accursed to me: and what is yet worse, even my

spiritual exercises and performances, upon which I chiefly build my hopes of happiness, my preaching, praying, and communicating, would all become a snare and a curse to me: yea, and Christ Himself, Who came into the world to bless and redeem me, if I walk not in His fear, believe not in His Gospel, or give not glory to His Name, will Himself be a curse and condemnation to me. So that I may say of every thing I have, or enjoy, or expect, all these God has made curses to me, because I have not blessed and glorified Him in them. Oh! who would not tremble and be wrought upon by these threatenings? Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations, Who art thus terrible in Thy judgments? Who would not love and obey Thee, Who art so gracious in Thy promises? Teach me, I beseech Thee, so to place my fear upon the former, that I may still fix my hope upon the latter, that though I fear Thy dreadful curses, yet I may never despair of Thy tender mercies.

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to arm myself with that spiritual courage and magnanimity, as to press through all duties and difficulties whatsoever, for the advancement of God's glory, and my own happiness.

Christianity is well termed a warfare, for a warfare it is, wherein no danger can be prevented, no enemy conquered, no victory obtained, without much courage and resolution. I have not only many outward enemies to grapple with, but I have myself, my worst enemy, to encounter and subdue. As for those enemies which are not so near me, by the assistance of God's Spirit, I can make pretty good shift to keep them at sword's point. But this enemy that is gotten within me, has so often foiled and disarmed me, that I have reason to say, as David did of his enemies, "it is too strong for me:" and as he said of the chief of his, "I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul;" so have I too much occasion to say, I shall one day fall by myself, as being myself the greatest enemy to my own spiritual interest and concerns. How necessary is it then that I should raise and muster up

[2 Sam. 22.
18.]

[Ps. 18.17.]

[1 Sam. 27.
1.]

all my force and courage, put on my spiritual armour, and make myself strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might! I know I must strive before I can “enter in at the strait gate;” I must win the crown before I can wear it, and be a member of the Church militant before I be admitted into the Church triumphant. In a word, I must go through a solitary wilderness, and conquer many enemies, before I come to the land of Canaan, or else I must never be possessed of it. What then, shall I lose my glory to balk my duty? Shall I let go my glorious and eternal possession to save myself from a seeming hardship which the Devil would persuade me to be a trouble and an affliction? Alas! if Christ had laid aside the great work of my Redemption, to avoid the undergoing God’s anger and man’s malice, what a miserable condition had I been in! And therefore, whatever taunts and reproaches I meet with from the presumptuous and profane, the infidel and atheistical reprobates of the age; let them laugh at my profession, or mock at what they are pleased to call preciseness; let them defraud me of my just rights, or traduce and bereave me of my good name and reputation; let them vent the utmost of their poisonous malice and envy against me, I have this comfortable reflection still to support me, that if I suffer all this for Christ’s sake, it is in the cause of One Who suffered a thousand times more for mine, and therefore it ought to be matter of joy and triumph, rather than of grief or dejection to me: especially considering, that “these my light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Upon the prospect of which, I firmly resolve, notwithstanding the growing strength of sin, and the overbearing prevalency of my own corrupt affections, to undertake all duties, and undergo all miseries, that God in His infinite wisdom thinks fit to lay upon me, or exercise my patience in.

[Luke 13. 24.]

[2 Cor. 4. 17.]

RESOLUTION VII.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, so to be angry as not to sin, and therefore to be angry at nothing but sin.

The former part of the resolution is founded in the

Eph. 4. 26. express command of St. Paul, "Be ye angry, and sin not;" and the latter is an explication of, as well as an inference drawn from it. For if anger be not only lawful, but a duty, as is here supposed, when it does not involve us in sin, the only difficulty is to know how that passion ought to be qualified to justify the exercise of it without being guilty of sin: and the circumstances or qualifications required for this are, first, that it be placed upon a due object; and, secondly, that it do not exceed its proper bounds.

Now, as nothing can deserve my anger, but what is disagreeable to my nature, and offensive to the Author of it, so nothing but sin can properly be called its object. The chief thing that I am to aim at in my actions, is the honouring, serving, and pleasing of God; and how can I serve and please God in being angry at any thing but what I know is displeasing to Him? I may be scorned, reproached, and vilified among my equals, or accused, condemned, and punished by my superiors; and these are treatments that are but too apt to raise and transport men into anger and revenge: but then, before I suffer this passion to boil up in me, I ought to consider, whether I have not behaved myself so as to deserve this sort of treatment; if I have, then there is no injury or injustice done me thereby, and therefore I ought not to be angry at it: if I have not, I must not be angry at the persons who act thus falsely and unjustly against me, but only at their sin; for to speak properly, it is not the person that offends me, but the sin. And this, not because it is injurious to me, but because it is offensive and displeasing to God Himself; for to be angry at any thing but what displeases God, is to displease God in being angry. Whenever, therefore, I receive any affronts or provocations of this nature, I am resolved, by God's grace assisting my endeavours, never to be moved or troubled at them, further than they are in their own nature sinful, and at the same time abstracting the sin from the persons, to pray for the pardon of those that are guilty of it; and not only so, but, according to the command and example of my Saviour, even to love them too.

But how shall I be sure to be angry at nothing but sin, and so not to sin in my anger, when every petty trifle or

cross accident is so apt to raise this passion in me? Why, the best method I can take, is that which the wise man directs me to, "Not to be hasty in my spirit," but "to defer my anger" according to "discretion." So that whensoever any thing happens that may incense and inflame my passion, I must immediately stop its career, and suspend the acts of it, till I have duly considered the motives and occasions that raised it. And as this will be a very good means to regulate the object of my anger, so likewise the measure of it: for he that is slow to wrath takes time to consider, and by consequence puts his passion under the conduct of his reason; and whoever does so, it will never suffer it to be transported beyond its proper bounds; whereas he whose anger is like tinder, that catches as soon as the spark is upon it, and who uses no means to stop its spreading, is presently blown up into a furious flame, which, before it is extinguished, may do more mischief than he is ever able to repair; for no man knows whither his anger may hurry him, when once it has got the mastery of him. In order, therefore, to prevent the fatal consequences of this passion, I now resolve never to speak or do any thing while I am under the influence of it, but take time to consider with myself, and reflect upon the several circumstances of the action or object it arises from, as well as the occasion and tendency of it; and as oft as I find any thing in it displeasing to God, to be regularly angry at that, to correct, rebuke, and reprove it with a zeal and fervour of spirit suitable to the occasion, but still to keep within the bounds of the truly Christian temper, which is always distinguished by love and charity, and exercises itself in meekness and moderation. And O! what a sedate and contented spirit will this resolution breed in me! How easy and quiet shall I be under all circumstances! Whilst others are peevish and fretful, and torment themselves with every petty trifle that does but cross their inclinations, or seem to be injurious to them, or fall into the other extreme of a stoical apathy or insensibility, I shall, by this resolution, maintain a medium betwixt both, and "possess my soul in peace and patience."

Eccles. 7. 9.
Prov. 19. 11.

[Luke 21.
19.]

V. CONCERNING MY WORDS.

HAVING thus far cleansed the fountain of my heart, with regard to my thoughts and affections, which are the immediate issues of my active soul, the next thing incumbent upon me is to regulate my outward conversation, both with respect to my words and actions. As to the first, the Holy

Jam. 3. 6. Scripture assures me, that the tongue is "a world of iniquity," and again, that "it is an unruly evil, which no man can tame." But is it indeed so unruly? then there is the more occasion to have it governed and subdued; and since that is not to be done by man alone, it is still more necessary that I should call in the assistance of that Divine Spirit that gives this character of it, first to fix my resolution, and then to strengthen me in the performance of them. I stedfastly purpose to imitate the royal Psalmist in this particular, and

Ps. 39. 1. to "take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my

Job 27. 3, 4. tongue." Yea, I am resolved, with holy Job, that "all the while my breath and the spirit of God are in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit." But since it is such an unruly instrument, so very difficult to be bridled or restrained, do Thou, O God, Who first madest it, enable me to get the mastery of it: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and keep the door of my lips," that, with St. Paul, "I may speak forth the words of truth and soberness," and make this unruly evil a happy instrument of much good. Which that I may do,

[Ps. 141. 3.]

[Acts 26. 25.]

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to speak much, lest I often speak too much, and not to speak at all, rather than to no purpose.

Eccl. 5. 3. It is the "voice of fools that is known by the multitude of words." In which there are "divers vanities," and "sin" too, whereas he that refraineth his lips is wise. This is that piece of Christian wisdom which I am now resolving to

ver. 7.

Prov. 10. 19.

look after; and therefore never to deliver my words out to the world by number but by weight, not by quantity but quality; not hiding my meaning under ambiguous terms and expressions, but fitting words exactly to express my meaning: not amusing those I converse with, with circles of impertinence and circumlocution, but coming directly to the matter, by the straight line of apt expressions; so as never to speak more than the matter requireth, nor to speak at all when no matter requireth. For why should I spend my breath for nothing? Alas! that is not all; if I spend it ill, it will be far worse than spending it for nothing; for our blessed Saviour has told me that I must answer “for every idle and unprofitable as well as profane word.” Matt. 12. 36. But now, if all the vain words I ever spoke should be written, as I have cause to believe they are, in the book of God’s remembrance, how many vast volumes must they make! And if an index should be made where to find profitable, and where idle words, how few references would there be to the former! what multitudes to the latter! and (what is yet more terrifying) if all these words should be brought in judgment against me at the Last Day, how would those very words then make me speechless, and what shame and confusion of face would they then strike me with! But I trust, through the blood of my Redeemer, and the tears of my repentance, they will all be washed and blotted out before I come to appear before Him. In order to this, as I heartily bewail and detest my former follies in this respect, so I firmly purpose and resolve to use my utmost endeavours for the time to come, not to give way to any more such idle words and expressions as are likely to be thus prejudicial to my eternal interest; but always to consider well beforehand, what, and how, and why I speak, and suffer no corrupt communication to “proceed out of my mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.” Eph. 4. 29.

I know there are some words that are purely jocose, spoken with no other intent, but only to promote mirth and divert melancholy; and these words, so long as they are harmless and innocent, so long as they do not reflect dishonour upon God, nor injure the character and reputation

of my neighbour, are very lawful and allowable, inasmuch as they conduce to the refreshing and reviving of my spirits and the preservation of my health. But then I must always take care so to wind and turn my discourse, that what recreates me in speaking, may profit others when spoke, that my words may not only be such as have no malignity in them, but such as may be useful and beneficial; not only such as do no hurt, but likewise such as may do much good to others, as well as to myself. To this end I firmly resolve, by the grace of God, never to speak only for the sake of speaking, but to weigh each word before I speak it, and consider the consequence and tendency of it, whether it may really be the occasion of good or evil, or tend to the edifying or scandalizing of the person I speak it to.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, not only to avoid the wickedness of swearing falsely, but likewise the very appearance of swearing at all.

Perjury is a sin condemned by the very laws of nature, insomuch that I should wrong my natural faculties, should I give way to, or be guilty of it. For the same nature that tells me the person of God is to be adored, tells me likewise His Name is to be revered; and what more horrid impiety can possibly be imagined, than to prostitute the most sacred Name of the Most High God, to confirm the lies of sinful men? I know swearing in a just matter and right manner may be as lawful under the New as under the Old Testament; for thus I find St. Paul saying, "As God is true:" "I call God for a record upon my soul:" wherein is contained the very nature of an oath, which is the calling God for a record and a witness to the truth of what we speak: but when it is to maintain falsehood, which is to an ill purpose, or lightly and vainly, which is to no purpose at all, it is a sin of the highest aggravation, that ought with the greatest detestation and abhorrence to be shunned and avoided. God saith, by Moses, "Thou shalt not swear by My Name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the Name of

2 Cor. 1. 18,
23.

Lev. 19. 12.

Thy God: I am the Lord." "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain." But farther, God says by Christ, "Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool," &c. So that not only by God and by Jesus are oaths, but swearing by any of God's creatures, is, in a manner, to swear by God Himself. I swear by the Heavens, can the Heavens hear, or witness what I say? No, it is the glorious Majesty that rules there that I call upon to witness the truth of the words I speak, and the sinfulness of my heart for swearing to them. Do I swear by my faith? But how is that? Can faith testify what I say? No, it is only He that wrought this faith in my heart can witness the truth of my words. And if I swear by the gifts of God, I do, in effect, swear by God Himself; otherwise I ascribe that to the creature which is only compatible to the glorious Creator, even the knowledge of the thoughts of my heart, how secret soever they be.

Exod. 20. 7;
Deut. 5. 11.

[Matt. 5.
34.]

But again, there is more in the Third Commandment than the Devil would persuade the world there is; for when God commands me "not to take His Name in vain," it is more than if He had commanded me only not to swear by it: for I cannot persuade myself but that every time I speak of God, when I do not think of Him, I take His Name in vain; and therefore I ought to endeavour to avoid even the mentioning of God, as well as swearing by Him, unless upon urgent occasions, and with reverence and respect becoming His Majesty; for, questionless, 'O Lord,' and 'O God,' may be spoken as vainly as 'By Lord,' and 'By God.' And therefore I ought never to speak such words without thinking really in my heart what I speak openly with my mouth, lest my name be written amongst those that "take the Name of God in vain." But, further still, I am resolved not only to avoid downright swearing, but likewise the very appearance of it: so that what doth but look like an oath, shall be as odious to me as what looks like nothing else.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to make my tongue and heart go together, so as never to speak with the one what I do not think in the other.

John 8. 44.

As my happiness consisteth in nearness and vicinity, so doth my holiness in likeness and conformity, to the chiefest good. I am so much the better, as I am liker the best; and so much the holier, as I am more conformable to the Holiest, or rather to Him Who is holiness itself. Now, one great title which the Most High is pleased to give to Himself, and by which He is pleased to reveal Himself to us, is the God of truth: so that I shall be so much the liker to the God of truth, by how much I am more constant to the truth of God. And the farther I deviate from this, the nearer I approach to the nature of the Devil, who "is the father of lies," and liars too. And hence it is, that of all the sins the men of fashion are guilty of, they can least endure to be charged of lying. To give a man the lie, or to say, 'You lie,' is looked upon as the greatest affront that can be put upon them. And why so? but only because this sin of lying makes them so like their father, the Devil, that a man had almost as well call them devils as liars: and therefore to avoid the scandal and reproach, as well as the dangerous malignity of this damnable sin, I am resolved, by the blessing of God, always to tune my tongue in 'unison' to my heart, so as never to speak any thing but what I think really to be true. So that if I ever speak what is not true, it shall not be the error of my will, but of my understanding. I know lies are commonly distinguished into officious, pernicious, and jocose; and some may fancy some of them more tolerable than others. But for my own part, I think they are all pernicious, and therefore not to be jested withal, nor indulged upon any pretence or colour whatsoever. Not as if it was a sin not to speak exactly as a thing is in itself, or as it seems to me in its literal meaning, without some liberty granted to rhetorical tropes and figures, (for so the Scripture itself would be chargeable with lies, many things being contained in it which

are not true in a literal sense,) but I must so use rhetorical, as not to abuse my Christian, liberty; and therefore never make use of hyperboles, ironies, or other tropes and figures, to deceive or impose upon my auditors, but only for the better adorning, illustrating, or confirming the matter. But there is another sort of lies most men are apt to fall into, and they are promissory lies; to avoid which I am resolved never to promise any thing with my mouth but what I intend to perform in my heart, and never to intend to perform any thing but what I am sure I can perform. For this is the cause and occasion of most promissory lies, that we promise that absolutely, which we should promise only conditionally: for though I may intend to do as I say now, yet there are a thousand weighty things may intervene, which may turn the balance of my intentions, or otherwise hinder the performance of my promise. So that unless I be absolutely sure I can do a thing, I must never absolutely promise to do it; and therefore in all such promises shall still put in, 'God willing,' or, 'by the help of God;' at the same time lifting up my heart to God, lest I take His Name in vain.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to speak of other men's sins only before their faces, and of their virtues only behind their backs.

To commend men when they are present, I esteem almost as great a piece of folly as to reprove them when they are absent; though I do confess in some cases, and to some persons, it may be commendable, especially where the person is not apt to be puffed up, but spurred on by it. But to rail at others when they hear me not, is the highest piece of folly imaginable; for as it is impossible they should get any good, so it is as impossible but that I should get much hurt by it. For such sort of words, make the best we can of them, are but idle and unprofitable, and may not only prove injurious to the person of whom, but even to whom, they are spoken, by wounding the credit of the former, and the charity of the latter; and so, by consequence, my own soul; nay, even

though I speak that which is true in itself, and known to be so to me: and therefore this way of backbiting ought, by all means, to be avoided. But I must, much more, have a care of raising false reports concerning any one, or of giving credit to them that raise them, or of passing my judgment till I have weighed the matter, lest I transgress the rules of mercy and charity, which command me not to censure any one upon others' rumours, or my own surmises; nay, if the thing be in itself true, still to interpret it in the best sense. But if I must needs be raking in other men's sores, it must not be behind their backs, but before their faces; for the one is a great sin, and the other may be as great a duty, even to reprove my neighbour for doing any thing offensive unto God, or destructive to his own soul, still endeavouring so to manage the reproof, as to make his sin loathsome to him, and to prevail upon him, if possible, to forsake it: but there is a great deal of Christian prudence and discretion to be used in this, lest others may justly reprove me for my indiscreet reproof of others. I must still fit my reproof to the time when, the person to whom, and the sin against which, it is designed; still contriving with

James 5. 20.

ch. 1. 20.

myself how to carry on this duty, so as that by "converting a sinner from the evil of his ways, I may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins;" not venting my anger against the person, but my sorrow for the sin that is reproved. Hot, passionate, and reviling words will not so much exasperate a man against his sin that is reproved, as against the person that doth reprove it. It is "not the wrath of man that worketh the righteousness of God." But this, of all duties, must be performed with a spirit of love and meekness; I must first insinuate myself into his affections, and then press his sin upon his conscience, and that directly or indirectly, as the person, matter, or occasion shall require, that so he that is reproved by me now may have cause to bless God for me to all eternity.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, always to speak reverently to my superiors, humbly to my inferiors, and civilly to all.

The Most High God, the Master of this great family of the world, for the more orderly government of it, hath, according to His infinite wisdom, set some in higher, some in lower places; hath made some as stewards, others as under servants; and, according to every man's work that He expects from him, He measures out his talents to him. Blessed be His Name for it, He hath set me in a middle form, giving me Agar's wish, subject neither to envy on one hand, nor pity on the other; so that I have both superiors to reverence, and inferiors to condescend to. And accordingly it is my duty so to behave myself towards them, that the reverend expressions of my mouth may manifest the obedient subjection of my heart to the power and authority God has given them over me. It is the express command of the Gospel that we should render to every man his due, "fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour belongeth," Rom. 13. 7. which words plainly imply both that it is some men's due to receive honour, and other men's duty to give it. And accordingly we find Paul, when he was brought before Acts 26. 25. Festus, doth not say, 'Art thou he whom they call Festus?' or, 'Thou, Festus,' as the misguided enthusiasts in our days would have said, but, "Most noble Festus." In like manner, St. John doth not call her he writes to in his Second Epistle, being a person of quality, 'woman,' but "elect lady." And this sort of reverence is further confirmed to us, not only by the constant custom of all nations, in all ages of the world, but it is likewise highly agreeable to the rules of right reason, as well as the order of government. For as there is both a natural and civil superiority, a superiority in gifts and age, and superiority likewise in office and station; so there is nothing can be more necessary than that there should be, in both these respects, a reverence and respect paid to the persons of men, answerable to these distinctions. And therefore I cannot but condemn that rude and unmannerly

behaviour of some of our modern schismatics towards their superiors, as factious and unreasonable, as well as repugnant to the dictates of the Divine Spirit, which the Prophets and Apostles were inspired and influenced by.

And as there is a reverence due from inferiors to their superiors, in point of conversation, so likewise are there some decent regards and civilities to be shewed even by superiors to their inferiors, who are always to be treated with candour and condescension in their ordinary capacities, and even where they are considered as criminals, with meekness and moderation. Insomuch that, methinks, it is one of the worst sights in the world to see some men that are gotten upon a little higher ground than their neighbours are, to look proudly and scornfully down upon all that are below them, disdaining to vouchsafe them the least favour or respect whatsoever. Such churlish, haughty, and foul-mouthed Nabals as these, are not only very unjust and unreasonable in their behaviour to others, but they are certainly the greatest enemies to themselves that they have in all the world besides; not only by drawing upon them the hatred and enmity of all that are about them, but likewise by tormenting themselves with such frivolous things as such spirits commonly do. Wherefore, that I may please God, my neighbour, and myself in what I speak, though I could excel other men (which is impossible for me to suppose) in every thing, I resolve, by God's grace, always to behave myself so as if I excelled them in nothing; and not only to speak reverently to them that are above me, but humbly and civilly to those that are beneath me too. I will always endeavour to use such humble winning words, as to manifest more of my love to them, than my power over them; I will always season my tongue with savoury, not bitter expressions, not making my mouth a vent for my fury and passion to fume out at, but rather an instrument to draw others' love and affection in by; still speaking as civilly unto others, as I would have them speak civilly to me.

VI. CONCERNING MY ACTIONS.

The other way of my soul's putting forth and shewing herself to the world is by her actions, which it concerns me as much to look to and regulate as my words; forasmuch as there is not the least ill circumstance in any action but what, unless it be repented of, must be brought into question, and answered for at the Last Day: for, though an action cannot be denominated good unless it be good in all circumstances and respects, yet it is always denominated bad, if it is bad only in one. As it is in music, if but one string jar, or be out of tune, the whole harmony is spoiled; so here, if but one circumstance in an action be wanting or defective, the whole action is thereby rendered immoral.

How much, therefore, doth it behove me to keep a strict watch over myself, and so to perform every action, and place every circumstance in it, that it may have its approbation in the court of Heaven! Well, I am resolved, by the grace of God, to try what I can do. I know it is impossible for me to resolve upon particular actions: but howsoever, I shall resolve upon such general rules, the application of which to particular acts may make them pleasing and acceptable in the sight of God, always premising this which I have resolved upon before as the best foundation, viz. to square all my actions by the Scripture rule, and to do nothing but what I have some way or other a warrant for in the word of God. Upon this fixed and steady principle,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing in obedience to the will of God.

It is not sufficient that what I do is the will of God, but I must therefore do it, because it is the will of God. For what saith my Father? "My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways;" so that my Father will not only have my hand, but my heart too: and my feet

Prov. 23. 26.

must not walk in the ways of God, till my eyes have observed and discerned them to be so. I may do an action that in itself is good, and yet, at the same time, not do a good action, if I do not therefore do it because it is so; *e.g.* I may give an alms to the poor, feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; but let me examine and consider well upon what principle these actions are founded, whether I, therefore, do them because God hath commanded them; if not, my feeding of the poor will be no more a good action than the “ravens feeding the Prophet” was. Their feeding of the Prophet was commanded by God, as well as my feeding of the poor; but I cannot say they did a good action, because though they did do this which was commanded by God, yet being irrational creatures, they could not reflect upon that command, and so could not do this in obedience to it. There are some persons, to the very frame and disposition of whose spirits, some sins are in their nature odious and abominable. Thus I have known some whose very constitutions have carried them into an antipathy to lust and luxury; and others, again, who could never endure to drink beyond their thirst, much less to unman and bebest themselves by drinking to excess. And the like may be observed of covetousness, which Luther was such an enemy to, that it is said to be against his very nature. Now, I say, though the abstaining from these sins be highly commendable in all sorts of persons, yet, unless, together with the streams of their natural dispositions, there runs likewise a spiritual desire to please God and obey His commands, their abstaining from these vices is no more than the brute beasts themselves do, who always act according to the temper of their bodies, and are never guilty of any excesses that are prejudicial to them. Hence servants are commanded to be

^{1 Kings 17. 6.} “obedient to their masters with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not to men,” which clearly shews, that though a servant doth obey his master, yet if he doth not do it in obedience unto God, he will not find acceptance with Him. So that whensoever I set my hand to any action that is good, I must still fix my eye upon God’s commanding of it, and do it only in respect to that, as knowing that if I give but a farthing to the poor in all my life, and do it in

^{Eph. 6. 5, 6, 7.}

obedience to God's commands, it shall be accepted sooner than theirs who feed hundreds at their table every day, and have not respect to the same command. Do I see a poor wretch ready to fall down to the earth for want of a little support, and my bowels begin to yearn towards him, let me search into my heart, and see what it is that raises this compassion in me. If it flows only from a natural tenderness to a brother in misery, without regard to the love of God, Who has commanded and enjoined it, the poor man may be succoured and relieved, but God will not be pleased or delighted with it. Again; do my friends stir me up to pray or hear, or do any other spiritual or civil action, and I therefore only do it because of their importunity, I may satisfy my friends' desire, but cannot properly be said to obey the commands of God in such a performance; so that the great and only foundation that I must resolve to build all the actions of my life upon, is an uniform obedience to that God by Whom alone I am enabled to perform them.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do every thing with prudence and discretion, as well as with zeal and affection.

Whilst I am penned up in this earthly tabernacle, I live almost as in a darksome dungeon, having no light to work by, but a little that springs in at the narrow crevices of my understanding. So that I had need to make use of all that little light and knowledge I have to regulate the heat and zeal that sometimes sits upon my spirit. For good passions may sometimes carry me into bad actions; my zeal, when hot in the pursuits of God's glory, may sometimes hurry me beyond His laws; especially where Christian prudence hath not first chalked out the way, and set the bounds for it: as in discourse, my zeal may put me upon throwing pearls before swine, or using words when silence may be more commendable. So in my actions too, unless wisdom and discretion govern and command my affections, I shall frequently run into such as would be altogether needless and

impertinent, and therefore ought to be omitted, and daily neglect several duties which ought to be performed.

But my understanding and discretion are chiefly requisite for the ordering of time and place, and other particular circumstances, the irregular management of which may easily spoil the best of actions. For instance, that may be a good work at one time and place which is not at another ; and may be very innocent and becoming in one person, though quite contrary in another. It is therefore the proper office of my understanding to point out the fittest time, and place, and person, for the performance of each action I engage in. As, for example, in distributing to the poor, my hand of charity must be either guided by the eye of understanding, where, when, how much, and to whom to give, or else I may, at the same time, not only offend God, but wrong my neighbour and myself too ; and so for all other actions whatsoever, which I ought therefore never to set myself about, though it be of the lowest rank, without consulting the rules of wisdom, modelled by the Law of God.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, never to set my hand, my head, or my heart, about any thing but what I verily believe is good in itself, and will be esteemed so by God.

Heb. 11. 6. "Without faith," the Apostle tells me, "it is impossible
Rom. 14. 23. to please God ;" "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
Where, by faith we are not to understand that saving faith whereby I believe my person is justified through Christ ; but that whereby I believe my works shall be accepted by God : for faith here is opposed to doubting ; and that not about Christ's dying for me, or my living in Him, but about the particular actions of my life. "He that doubteth," saith the Apostle, "is damned if he eat," that is, he that eateth that which he doubteth whether he may lawfully eat or no, is damned, because he sins in doing it, and therefore may be damned for it. But why so ? Because "he eateth not of faith," because he doth that which he knows not whether he may do or no, not believing it to be really good in itself, or

acceptable unto God. And though the Apostle here instances only in that particular action of eating, yet what he says with relation to that is properly applicable to all the other actions of life: for he afterwards subjoins, "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" whatsoever it is, good or bad, if not done by faith, it is sin. And truly, this particular will be of great use through my whole life, for the avoiding of many sins, and for the doing of much good: for many things which are good in themselves may, for want of faith, become quite otherwise to me; my heart not believing what I do is good, my hand can never make it so. Or if I think what I do is bad, though it be not so in itself, yet my very thinking it so will make it so to me. And this is that which we call doing any thing with a good conscience, or keeping, as St. Paul did, "our conscience void of offence." And to go contrary to the dictates of my conscience, in this particular, is to transgress the command of God. For in this conscience is as God's vicegerent in my soul; what conscience commands, God commands; what conscience forbids, God forbids; that is, I am as really under the power of conscience as the commands of God in such a case. So that if I do not obey the former, it is impossible for me to obey the latter. But how much then doth it behove me to see that my conscience be rightly informed in every thing? For as, if a judge be misinformed, it is impossible he should pass righteous judgment; so if conscience be misinformed, it is impossible I should do a righteous act. And what a miserable case shall I then be in? If I do what in itself is sinful, though my conscience tells me it is good, yet I sin, because the act in itself is sinful; and if I do what in itself is good, and my conscience tells me it is bad, I sin, because my conscience tells me it is so: so that as my conscience is, so will my actions be. For this reason I resolve, in the presence of my great Creator, never to do any thing till I have first informed my conscience, from the Word of God, whether it be lawful for me to do it or no; or, in case it be not determined there, to make a strict search and inquiry into each circumstance of it, considering with myself what good or evil may issue from it, and so what good or evil there is in it; and according as my conscience, upon the

[Acts 24.
16.]

hearing of the arguments on both sides, shall decide the matter, I shall do or not do it; never undertaking any thing upon mere surmises, because it may be good, but upon a real and thorough persuasion that it is so.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do all things for the glory of God.

As I was not made by, so neither for myself; for God, Prov. 16. 4. says the wise man, "made all things for Himself." And being thus made for God, it follows of course that I ought to act for God; otherwise I shall frustrate the end of my creation. Insomuch, that whatsoever I make my chief aim in what I do, I make that my God. Do I aim at the glory of the All-glorious Jehovah? it is Him I make my God. Do I aim at riches? then it is Mammon I make my God; Col. 3. 5. and therefore is it that covetousness is called idolatry. Do Phil. 3. 19. I aim at pleasures? it is my senses I make my God. Do I aim at popular applause or worldly advancements? or, do I aim at my own health or life? These are my gods. For what is worshipping but making all the powers of my soul and actions of my body to bow and stoop to them? Hence [Isa. 42. 8.] it is that the Most High God, Who hath said, He "will not give His glory to another," hath been so express in commanding me to do all things to His glory: "Whether ye 1Cor. 10. 31. eat or drink," says the Apostle, "or whatsoever ye do, do all things to the glory of God." But how can I, poor worm, be said to do any thing to the glory of the eternal God? Why, in the same manner as He is said to do what He doeth for His Own glory. And how is that? By manifesting His glory unto others. Thus if I can but so live and act as thereby to evidence that the God I serve is a glorious God, glorious in holiness, glorious in goodness, glorious in wisdom, glorious in power, and the like, this is doing all things to the glory of God. For example, by praying to God, I avouch Him to be a God infinite in knowledge, that He is present with me, and hears me pray wheresoever I am; and I own Him to be infinite in mercy, in that He will

suffer such a sinful creature as I am to address myself to Him, &c. And so there is not the least action I undertake, but I am so to manage it, as to manifest the glory of God by it, making it my end and design so to do : otherwise let me do what I will, I am sure to sin ; for though, I confess, a good end can never make a bad action good, yet a bad end will always make a good action bad : so that as ever I would do anything that is good, I must be sure to do it to the glory of God.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to mingle such recreations with my business as to further my business by my recreations.

Having wholly devoted myself to God, all I have or am is still to be improved for Him ; insomuch that was it not for the necessities of nature, every moment of my life should, and ought to be spent in the immediate worship and service of Him. But though nature requires some time from my solemn serving of Him for the recreating of myself, yet grace requireth that this recreating of myself should still be for the promoting of His service : so that my recreations do not only fit me for further service, but they, in themselves, should be some way or other serviceable to Him ; which that they may be, I must have as great a care in the choice as in the use of my recreations.

There are some recreations that are so far from conducting to His service, that they make more for the incensing of His wrath ; as drinking and gaming, which, though in themselves lawful, yet, as they often prove an occasion of swearing, lying, cheating, and contention amongst men, and by consequence of wrath in God ; so they ought, by all means, to be shunned and avoided. Indeed it may be questioned whether gaming be ever a lawful recreation ; for either it is a lottery, or not ; if it be a lottery, it is not lawful, because it is a great presumption and sin to set God at work to recreate ourselves ; for poor nothings to employ the chiefest good immediately to determine such frivolous

and trifling impertinences. If it be not a lottery, then it is not a pure recreation ; for if it depends upon man's wit and study, it exercises his brain and spirits as much as if he was about other things. So that being on one side not lawful, on the other side no recreation, it can on no side be a lawful recreation : for what is the end of recreations but to revive my languishing spirits, to let them rest and be quiet a little, when they are tired with too much exercise, that they may be fresher, livelier, and fitter for work afterwards ? Hence it is that God indeed hath provided a recreation for all sensible creatures, sleep, which is the rest of the spirits in the nerves. When the little animal spirits have been all the day running up and down upon the soul's errands, then to lie down still and quiet is a great refreshment and revivement to them, provided still that it be moderately used : whereas the indulging ourselves too much in it is rather a clogging and stupifying of them ; as we see in our bodies, which, when not accustomed to, are most averse from, and unfit for, exercise. So that the chief and only time for recreation is, when my spirits are either weary with labour and study, or else called in to some necessary employment in some other place ; as at and after meals, especially such as are of a hard digestion ; for then the spirits have enough to do to turn the food we eat into good nourishment. And, therefore, the intenseness of study, running, wrestling, and suchlike violent exercises, are not proper at such a time ; because as in studying we draw the spirits from the stomach to the head ; so in the other exercises, such as moderate walking, conference, and free discourse about common but necessary points, we send them from the stomach into other parts of the body, where they are to be set on work. But that which I have found the best recreation both to my body and mind, whensoever either of them stands in need of it, is music, which exercises at once both my body and my soul, especially when I play myself. For then, methinks, the same motion that my hand makes upon the instrument, the instrument makes upon my heart ; it calls in my spirits, composes my thoughts, delights my ear, recreates my mind, and so not only fits me for after business, but fills my heart, at the present, with pure and useful

thoughts; so that when the music sounds the sweetliest in my ears, truth commonly flows the clearest into my mind. And hence it is that I find my soul is become more harmonious, by being accustomed so much to harmony, and so averse to all manner of discord, that the least jarring sounds, either in notes or words, seem very harsh and unpleasant to me.

That there is something more than ordinary in music, appears from David's making use of it for driving away ^[1 Sam. 16. 23; 2 Kings 3. 15.] the evil spirit from Saul, and Elisha for the bringing of the good Spirit upon himself. From which I am induced to believe, that there is really a sort of secret and charming power in it, that naturally dispels from the mind all or most of those black humours which the evil spirit uses to brood upon, and by composing it into a more regular, sweet, and docible disposition, renders it the fitter for the Holy Spirit to work upon, the more susceptible of Divine grace, and a more faithful messenger whereby to convey truth to the understanding. But however that be, I must necessarily acknowledge, that of all recreations, this is by far the most suitable to my temper and disposition, in that it is not only an exercise to my body, but to my mind too; my spirits being thereby made the more nimble and active, and, by consequence, the fitter to wait upon my soul, and be employed by her in whatsoever business she is engaged. But in this, and all other recreations, I must always take care not to exceed my measure, either in point of time or intention; I must not follow them too close, nor spend too many hours in them, but still resolve to use them, as that they may not become a snare to me, but answer the ends for which they were designed, that when God shall call me to it, I may give Him as good an account of my recreations as of my necessary duties.

VII. CONCERNING MY RELATIONS.

BUT be not deceived, O my soul, thou art not yet advanced far enough: it is not sufficient to pretend to holiness in my thoughts and affections, and in my words and actions, unless I express it likewise in all the relations and conditions of

[Ps. 119. 96.] life. The Commandments of God are said to be "exceeding broad;" they extend themselves to every capacity I can possibly be in, not only enjoining me to live soberly in respect to myself, but righteously to my neighbour, obediently to my sovereign, lovingly to my wife, and faithfully to my people; otherwise I cannot live holily unto God. And therefore, if I would be thoroughly religious I must further endeavour to fix my resolutions with regard to the several duties the Most High expects from me in all those particular relations I bear to Him during my sojourning here on earth.

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to honour and obey the king or prince whom God is pleased to set over me, as well as to expect he should safeguard and protect me, whom God is pleased to set under him.

The King of kings and Lord of lords, the great and glorious Monarch of all the world, having enacted many gracious laws, is pleased to set over every kingdom and nation such persons as may put them in execution. So that I cannot but look upon a lawful king as truly a representative of the Most High God, as a parliament is of the people. And am therefore persuaded, that whosoever rebels against him, rebels against God Himself; not only in that he rebels against the ordinance of God, and so against the God of that ordinance; but because he rebels against him whom God hath set up as His vicegerent to represent His Person, and execute His laws, in such a part of His dominions. Hence it is that these two precepts, "Fear God and honour the king," are so often joined together in Holy Writ; for he that fears God's power cannot but honour His authority; and he that honours not the king, that represents God, cannot be said to fear God, Who is represented by him. And hence likewise it is, that God hath been as strict and express in enjoining us obedience to our governors as to Himself: [1 Pet. 2. 17.] for, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Why? Because "there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God:" and He has denounced as great a judgment against such as rebel against the magistrate He hath ordained as against

Rom. 13. 1.

those that rebel against Himself; “for whosoever resisteth ver. 2. the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.” So that the wrath of God shall as certainly fall upon those that rise up against the king as upon those that fight against God. And no wonder that the punishment should be the same when the fault is the same: for he that fights against his king, fights against God Himself, Who hath invested him with that power and authority to govern His people, representing His Own glorious Majesty before them. Upon this ground it is that I believe the wickedness of a prince cannot be a sufficient plea for the disobedience of his subjects; for it is not the holiness, but the authority of God that he represents, which the most wicked, as well as the most holy person may be endowed with: and therefore when the Gospel first began to spread itself over the earth, though there was no Christian king or supreme magistrate, of what title soever, to cherish and protect it; nay, though the civil powers were then the greatest enemies to it; yet even then were the Disciples of Christ enjoined to “submit themselves to every ordi- [1 Pet. 2. 13.] nance of man for the Lord’s sake.” Insomuch that did I live amongst the Turks, I should look upon it as my duty to obey the Grand Seignior in all his lawful edicts, as well as the most Christian and pious king in the world. For suppose a prince be never so wicked, and never so negligent in his duty of protecting me, it doth not follow that I must neglect mine in obeying him. In such a case I have another duty added to this, and that is to pray for him, and to intercede with God for his conversion: for thus hath the King of kings commanded, that “prayers, supplications, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made as for all men,” so more especially “for kings, and those 1 Tim. 2.1,2. that are in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.” So that whensoever I address to the Court of Heaven, I must be sure to remember my sovereign on earth, that God would be pleased to enable His servant to reign on earth, as Himself doth in Heaven, in righteousness and mercy. But especially in case of any seeming or real default or defect, though I do not think it a subject’s duty to judge or censure his sovereign’s actions,

I am to be the more earnest in my prayers and intercessions for him; but upon no account to fight or rebel against him.

And if I am thus strictly obliged to honour, obey, and pray for a bad prince, how much more should I pay those duties to one who represents God, not only in His authority, but in His holiness too! In this case, sure, as there is a double engagement to reverence and obedience, so I am doubly punishable if I neglect to shew it either to the prince himself, or those that are set under him; for the same obligations that lie upon me for my obedience to the king, bind me likewise to obey his inferior officers and magistrates that act under him; and that for this reason, because as he represents God, so they represent Him; and therefore whatever they command in His Name, I look upon it as much my duty to obey, as if it was commanded by His Own mouth; and accordingly do, from this moment, by the grace of God, resolve to put this duty in practice.

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the same Divine grace, to be as constant in loving of my wife as cautious in choosing her.

Though it be not necessary for me to resolve upon marrying, yet it may not be improper to resolve, in case I should, to follow these rules of duty, first in the choice of a wife, and secondly, in the affection that I ought to bear towards her.

As for the first, I shall always endeavour to make choice of such a woman for my spouse who has first made choice of Christ as a spouse for herself, that none may be made one flesh with me who is not made one spirit with Christ my Saviour. For I look upon the image of Christ as the best mark of beauty I can behold in her, and the grace of God as the best portion I can receive with her. These are excellencies which, though not visible to our carnal eyes, are nevertheless agreeable to a spiritual heart, and such as all wise and good men cannot choose but be enamoured

with. For my own part, they seem to me such necessary qualifications, that my heart trembles at the thoughts of ever having a wife without them. What! shall I marry one that is wedded already to her sins? or have possession of her body only, when the Devil has possession of her soul? Shall such a one be united to me here who shall be separated from me for ever hereafter, and condemned to scorch in everlasting burnings? No, if ever it be my lot to enter into that state, I beg of God, that He would direct me in the choice of such a wife only to lie in my bosom here as may afterwards be admitted to rest in Abraham's bosom to all eternity; such a one as will so live, and pray, and converse, with me upon earth, that we may both be entitled to sing, rejoice, and be blessed together for ever, in Heaven.

That this, therefore, may be my portion and felicity, I firmly resolve never to set upon such a design before I have first solicited the throne of grace, and begged of my Heavenly Father to honour me with the partnership of one of His beloved children; and shall afterwards be as careful and cautious as I can never to fix my affections upon any woman for a wife till I am thoroughly persuaded of the grounds I have to love her as a true Christian.

If I could be thus happy as to meet with a wife of these qualities and endowments, it would be impossible for me not to be hearty and sincere in my affection toward her, even though I had the greatest temptations to place them upon another: for how could I choose but love her, who has God for her Father, the Church for her mother, and Heaven for her portion, who loves God, and is beloved of Him? especially when I consider, that thus to love her, will not only be my duty, but my happiness too.

As to the duty, it is frequently inculcated in Scripture, that "husbands should love their wives," and that not with a common love, but as "Christ loved His Church," "yea, as their own body," or, "as themselves," and they are so to love them as not to be "bitter against them," not to be passionate or angry with them upon every light matter, nor suffer their resentments to rise to that height upon any occasion whatsoever, as to abate the least spark of conjugal affection towards them, but to "nourish and cherish them,"

Eph. 5. 25.
ver. 28.
ver. 33.

Col. 3. 19.

even as the Lord the Church." In a word, to do all the kind offices they can for them in their civil capacities, and to help and forward them, by all means possible, in the way that leads to Heaven ; that as they are united in the flesh, so they may likewise be united in the spirit, and raised and rewarded together at the general resurrection.

And as love is the great duty, so is it likewise the chief happiness of a married state. I do not mean that love whereby she loves me, but that wherewith I love her ; for if I myself have not a cordial esteem and affection for her, what happiness will it be to me to be beloved by her ! or rather, what a misery would it be to be forced to live with one I know I cannot love ! As ever, therefore, I desire to be happy, I must perform my duty in this particular, and never aim at any other end, in the choice of a wife, or expect any other happiness in the enjoyment of her, but what is founded in the principle of pure and inviolable love. If I should court and marry a woman for riches, then whenever they fail or take their flight, my love and my happiness must drop and vanish together with them. If I choose her for beauty only, I shall love her no longer than while that continues, which is only till age or sickness blasts it, and then farewell, at once, both duty and delight.

But if I love her for her virtues, and for the sake of God, Who has enjoined it as a duty, that our affections should not be alienated or separated by any thing but death ; then, though all the other sandy foundations fail, yet will my happiness remain entire ; even though I should not perceive those mutual returns of love which are due to me from her upon the same bottom. But O ! the happiness of that couple whose inclinations to each other are as mutual as their duties ; whose affections, as well as persons, are linked together with the same tie. This is the chief condition required to make the state of matrimony happy or desirable, and shall be the chief motive with me to induce me to enter into it. For though it be no happiness to be beloved by one I do not love, yet it is certainly a very great one to be beloved by one I do. If this then be my lot, to have mutual expressions of love from the person I fix my affections upon, what joy and comfort will it raise in my heart, with what

peace and amity shall we live together here, and what glory and felicity may we not promise ourselves hereafter ! What is here said of the duty in choosing and loving of a wife may be likewise applied to the woman's duty in choosing and loving her husband. But being not so immediately concerned in this, I pass on to my next resolution.

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my endeavour to give to God whatsoever children He shall be pleased to give to me, that as they are mine by nature, they may be His by grace.

I have sometimes wondered at the providence of God, in bringing so many millions of people out of the loins of one man ; and cannot but make this use of it, even to stir up myself to a double diligence, in bringing up my children " in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." For who [Eph. 6. 4.] knows but the salvation of ten thousand souls may depend upon the education of one single child ?

If I train up my son in the ways of religion, and teach him what it is to keep " a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man ;" he will then not only have an inward sense of his own duty, but take all possible care to instil it into others, whether children or servants, that are committed to his charge : and these again will do the same to theirs, by teaching them to walk in the same path ; till, by degrees, the piety and holiness of one man has diffused itself to all succeeding generations. But now, on the other hand, if I neglect the care of my son's education, and suffer the leprosy of sin and wickedness to taint and corrupt him, it is great odds, without an extraordinary interposition of Divine grace, but the infection may spread itself over all my posterity ; and so draw down upon me the curses and accusations of ten thousand souls in Hell, which might otherwise have been praising and blessing God for me to all eternity, in Heaven. Hence it is that I am resolved to endeavour to be a spiritual, as well as natural father to my children ; yea, to take more care to get a portion for their souls in Heaven,

than to make provision for their bodies upon earth. For if
 [1Tim.5.8.] he be “accounted worse than an infidel, that provides not for his family” the sustenance of their bodies, what is he that suffers his family to neglect the Salvation of their souls? That nothing of this, therefore, may be laid to my charge, if ever Providence sees fit to bless me with children of my own, I will take effectual care, so soon as conveniently I can, to devote them unto God by Baptism, that what guilt they have contracted, by coming through my loins, may be washed away by the laver of regeneration; and then to be constantly soliciting the throne of grace, that He Who hath given them to me would be pleased to give Himself to them.

The next thing to be done, as soon as they come to be capable of instruction, is to take all occasions, and make use of all means, to work the knowledge of God into their heads, and the grace of Christ into their hearts; by teaching
 [Eccles. 12. 1.] them to “remember their Creator in the days of their youth;” by acquainting them with the duties that He that made them expects from them; with the rewards they shall have if dutiful, and the punishment they shall feel, if disobedient children; still accommodating my expressions to the shallow capacity of their tender years. And according to their doing, or not doing, of what they have been told, I shall reward them with what is most pleasing, or punish them with what is most displeasing to their years. To speak to them of Heaven and eternal glory will not encourage them so much as to give them their childish pleasures and desires: and the denouncing of a future Hell will not affright them so much as the inflicting a present smart. Hence it is that Solomon so oft inculcates this upon parents, as their duty to their children, that they should not “spare
 [Prov. 13. 24; 19. 18; 23. 13, 14.] the rod, lest they spoil the child.” But I must still take care to let them understand, that what I do is from a principle of love and affection to them, not of fury and indignation against them. For, by this means, God may correct me for correcting them; I may set before my children such an example of indiscreet and sinful passion, as they will be apt enough to learn without my teaching them. On the other hand, it behoves me, if possible, so to order my family,

that my children may not see or hear, and so not learn any thing but goodness in it; for commonly, according to what we learn when we are young, we practise when we are old. And therefore, as I shall take great care that my children learn nothing that is evil or sinful at home, so likewise that they do not come into such company abroad, where their innocence may be assaulted with swearing, cursing, or any kind of profane or obscene discourse, which the generality of our youth are so obnoxious to. Or, at least, if this is not wholly to be avoided, to prevent these poisonous weeds from taking root in the heart, it behoves me to take all opportunities of discoursing to them of God and Christ, of the immortality of their souls, and the future state they are to be doomed to in another world, when they have lived a little while in this; that, according as they grow in years, they may “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Christ.” And when they come to years of discretion, capable of doing further honour and service to God and their country by some calling or profession, I must be sure to place them in such a one as may be no hinderance to that high and Heavenly calling which they have in Christ Jesus, but rather contribute to further and promote it; that being like tender plants engrafted into the true vine, they may bring forth much fruit, to God’s glory, to my comfort, and their own Salvation. [2 Pet. 3. 18.]

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to do my duty to my servants, as well as expect they should do theirs to me.

It was Joshua’s, and, by God’s grace, it shall be my resolution, that “I and my house will serve the Lord.” I in the first place, and then my house; for if I myself do not, I cannot expect that they should. So that for the ordering of my family in general, I must not only press their duty upon them, but likewise practise my own duty in suppressing all vicious and lewd conversation, and composing all strife and contention amongst them; in praying every day at the least twice with them; in catechising and ex-

pounding the principles of religion to them, and in calling for an account of every sermon and godly discourse they hear, either in private or in public; in seeing that they constantly frequent the Divine Ordinances, and that they behave themselves so conscientiously therein, that they may be, some way or other, the better by them. And to these ends, I think it my duty to allow my servants some time every day wherein to serve God, as well as to see they spend their other hours in serving me; and to make them sensible that they do not serve me only for myself, but ultimately and principally in reference unto God; their serving me making way for my better serving God. And for this reason I cannot believe but it is as great a sin to cumber my servants as myself with too much worldly business. For how can they spend any time in the service of God, when I require all their time in my own? And how justly should I be condemned, if by this means I should bring them into a sort of necessity of sinning, either in not obeying God, or not obeying me! Not that I think it a servant's duty to neglect his Creator to serve his master; on the contrary, he is obliged in all cases where

[Acts 5. 29.] their commands interfere, to "obey God rather than man."

But where they do not, there is a strict injunction upon all
 Eph. 6. 5. servants, that they should be "obedient to their masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ." But how with fear and trembling? Why, fearing lest they should offend God in offending them, and trembling at the thoughts of being disobedient to the Divine command, which enjoins them to "be obedient to their masters in all things, not answering again," that is, not repining at their masters' lawful commands, nor muttering and maundering against them, as some are apt to do. For it is a great sin in servants to speak irreverently to their masters, as in masters to speak passionately to their servants. But how are servants to give obedience to their masters with "singleness of heart as unto Christ?" Why, by obeying them only in obedience unto Christ; that is, they are therefore to do their masters' will, because it is the Lord's will they should do it; serving them "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart, with good-will, doing service

Eph. 6. 6, 7;
 Col. 3. 22.

as to the Lord, and not to men." This is the duty, therefore, that I shall oft be inculcating upon my servants, and shall as oft be reflecting upon myself, that what I require for my own service may always be in subordination to God's, Who is our common Lord and Master, Whose laws are equally obliging to all ranks and conditions of men, and in whose sight "there is no respect of persons."

[Col. 3. 25.]

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to feed the flock that God shall set me over with wholesome food, neither starving them by idleness, poisoning them with error, nor puffing them up with impertinencies.

And here I cannot but declare, that ever since I knew what it was to study, I have found by experience that spiritual and intellectual pleasures do as far surpass those that are temporal and sensual, as the soul exceeds the body. And for this reason, as I always thought the study and profession of divinity to be the noblest and most agreeable of all others, as carrying with it its own encouragement and reward, so I have often wondered with myself, that the greatest persons in the world should not be desirous and ambitious of exercising their parts in the study of this necessary as well as sublime science, and even devoting themselves to the profession of it. For, do they aspire after honour? what greater honour can there be than to be the mouth of God to the people, and of the people unto God; to have the Most High Himself not only to speak by them, but in them too? What greater honour than to have a commission from the King of kings, to represent Himself before His people, and call upon them in His Name, to "turn from the error of their ways," and walk in the paths of God to everlasting glory? What greater honour, than to be an instrument in His hand to bring poor souls from the gates of Hell, to set them among princes in the court of Heaven? Do they thirst after pleasures? What greater pleasure can they have, than to make it their business to feed themselves and others with the bread and water of

life? But stay, my soul, let not thy thoughts run only upon the dignity of thy function, and the spiritual pleasures that attend the faithful discharge of it, but think likewise upon the strict account thou must give of it in another life. The serious consideration of which, as it cannot but be a great comfort to the true and faithful pastor, who has diligently

[1 Pet. 2.2.] fed his flock with the “sincere milk of God’s word;” so must it be a great terror and confusion to the slothful and negligent, the false and deceitful dispensers of the Divine mysteries, who have either carelessly lost, or treacherously deluded, the souls of those committed to their charge, which they must one day answer for, as well as for their own. And therefore, that nothing of this kind may ever be laid to my charge, I solemnly promise and resolve, before God, so to demean myself in the exercise of my ministerial function, as to make the care of souls, especially of those committed to my charge, the chief study and business of my life, and that without partiality or exception. I must not single out some of the best of my flock, such as I have the highest respect for, or have received the greatest obligations from; but “minister to every one according to their several necessities.” If I meet with men of knowledge and virtue, my business must be to confirm and establish them therein; if with those that are ignorant and immoral, to teach and instruct them in the ways of religion, and by all means possible to reclaim and reduce them to the exercise of their duty; always remembering, that as the blessed Jesus, the

[1 Pet. 2. 25.] “Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,” was “not sent save unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” and “came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” so it is the indispensable duty of His Apostles and ministers (and, by the grace of God, I shall make it mine) to follow His example in this particular, to spare no time nor pains in the reformation of sinners, though it be never so irksome and difficult to accomplish; even though I should meet with such

[Matt. 15. 24; 9. 13.] as the Prophet David speaks of, “who hate to be reformed, and cast my words behind them.” And, therefore, as I know it is my duty, so I shall always endeavour to take pleasure in the several offices I perform of this kind, “to

[Ps. 50.17.]

strengthen the weak, heal the wounded, and bind up the broken heart;” to call in those that err and go astray, and “to seek and save those that are lost.”

[Luke 19.
10.]

To these ends, though preaching is, without doubt, a most excellent and useful, as well as necessary duty, (especially if it be performed as it ought, with zeal and reverence, and the doctrine applied and pressed home with sincerity of affection,) yet I shall not think it sufficient to instruct my people only from the pulpit, but take all opportunities to instil good thoughts and principles into their minds in my private conversation. I know it is impossible for all ministers frequently to visit every particular person or family in their parish, there being in some parishes, especially in and about London, so many thousands of souls. But, howsoever, if it should please the Lord to call me to such a flock, though I cannot visit all, I shall visit as many as I can; especially those that are sick and infirm, and be sure to feed them “with the sincere milk of the word,” such as may turn to their spiritual nourishment, and make them “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” I will not fill their heads with speculative notions and niceties in divinity (which, among the less judicious, are very often the occasion of heresy and error, and sometimes also of delusion and distraction). But my chief care shall be to instruct them in those necessary truths which their Christian faith indispensably obliges them to know and believe, and press them to the performance of those duties, without which they cannot be saved; meekly and impartially reproving the particular vices they are most inclined and addicted to, and cheerfully encouraging and improving whatever virtuous actions they are any of them exemplary in, and whatever good habits or inclinations the Divine grace has put into their hearts. And since love and charity is the great characteristic of our profession, the bond and cement of all other Christian duties, in order to make my ministry the more successful, I resolve, in the last place, not only to avoid all differences and disputes with them myself, but amicably to compose all such as may arise among the neighbours. In a word, I shall make it my endeavour in all things so to approve myself as a faithful minister,

both in life and doctrine, before them, that at the Last Day, when the great God shall call for my parish and myself to appear before Him, I may be fitly prepared to give an account of both ; at least to answer for as many of them as He requires ; and may with joy and comfort pronounce this sentence of my Saviour, if it may without offence be applied to His ministers, “ Behold I and the children which Thou hast given me.”

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to be as faithful and constant to my friend, as I would have my friend to be faithful and constant to me.

Having before resolved to be zealous in loving God, I here resolve to be as constant in loving my friend. But why do I thus resolve upon this ? Is it possible to live and not to love ? This to me seems as plain a contradiction as to live and not to live. For love, in my opinion, is as much the life of the soul, as the soul is the life of the body. So that for my own part I shall expect to cease to live at the very moment that I cease to love ; nay, I do not look upon love only as my life, but as the joy and comfort of it too. And, for this reason, I shall never envy any man his riches, pleasures, or preferments, provided that I can but enjoy the persons my soul delights in, viz. Christ in the first place, and my friend and neighbour in the second : but then must have a great care where, and how, I place this affection ; for if I place it wrong, my very loving will be sinning. And, therefore, I shall always endeavour to make such only my friends as are friends to God. Not that I look upon it as necessary to love my friends always under that notion only, as they are friends of God ; for then no love but that which is spiritual would be lawful ; whereas there is, doubtless, a natural love, that is no less a duty, and, by consequence, no less lawful than the other ; as the love of parents towards their children, and children towards their parents ; and the mutual complacency that arises betwixt friends as well as relations, from the harmony and agreement of humours and tempers. Thus

our Saviour is said to have loved St. John more than any of His other Disciples, which cannot be understood of a spiritual love, for this undoubtedly was equal to all ; but being a man subject to the like passions (though not imperfections) as we are, He placed more natural affection upon, and might have more natural complacency in John, than in His other Disciples. And therefore when I say I am to make such my friends only as are friends to God, my meaning is, that I will make none my friends but such as I know to be good men and good Christians ; such as deserve my love in a spiritual as well as a natural sense : and since I may lawfully love my friend in both these senses, the one is so far from being exclusive, that it is really perfective, of the other. And for this reason, as the spiritual good of my friend is always to be preferred before that which is temporal, I am resolved to found the one upon the other. I will always be ready, as oft as He stands in need either of my advice, encouragement, or assistance, to do Him all the kind offices I can in His worldly affairs ; to promote His interest, vindicate His character from secret aspersions, and defend His person from open assaults ; to be faithful and punctual in the performance of my promises to Him, as well as in keeping the secrets He has intrusted me with. But all these things are to be done with a tender regard to the honour of God, and the duties of religion ; so that the services I do Him in His temporal concerns, must still be consistent with, and subservient to, the spiritual interest and welfare of His immortal soul, in which I am principally obliged to manifest my friendship towards him. If I see him wander out of the right way, I must immediately take care to advertise him of it, and use the best means I can to bring him back to it ; or if I know him to be guilty of any reigning vices, I must endeavour to convince him of the danger and malignity of them, and importune and persuade him to amend and forsake them. And lastly, I must be as constant in keeping my friend, as cautious in choosing him ; still continuing the heat of my affections towards him, in the day of his affliction, as well as in the height of his prosperity.

These are the rules whereby I resolve to express my friendship unto others, and whereby I would have others to express their friendship unto me.

VIII. CONCERNING MY TALENTS.

HAVING so solemnly devoted myself to God, according to the covenant He hath made with me, and the duty I owe to Him, not only what I am, and what I do, but likewise what I have, is still to be improved for Him. And this I am bound to, not only upon a federal, but even a natural account; for whatsoever I have, I received from Him, and therefore all the reason in the world, that whatsoever I have should be improved for Him. For I look upon myself as having no other propriety in what I enjoy, than a servant hath in what he is intrusted with to improve for his master's use: thus, though I should have ten thousand pounds a-year, I should have no more of my own than if I had but two-pence in all the world. For it is only committed to my care for a season, to be employed and improved to the best advantage, and will be called for again at the grand audit, when I must answer for the use or abuse of it; so that whatsoever in a civil sense I can call my own, that, in a spiritual sense, I must esteem as God's. And therefore it nearly concerns me to 'manage all' the talents I am entrusted with, as things I must give a strict account for at the Day of Judgment. As God bestows His mercies upon me, through the greatness of His love and affection, so I am to restore His mercies back again to Him, by the holiness of my life and conversation. In a word, whatever I receive from His bounty, I must some way or other lay out for His glory, accounting nothing mine own any further than as I improve it for God's sake, and the spiritual comfort of my own soul.

In order to this, I shall make it my endeavour, by the blessing of God, to put in practice the following resolutions,

RESOLUTION I.

I am resolved, if possible, to redeem my time past, by using a double diligence for the future ; to employ and improve all the gifts and endowments, both of body and mind, to the glory and service of my Great Creator.

Time, health, and parts, are three precious talents generally bestowed upon men, but seldom improved for God. To go no further than myself, how much time and health have I enjoyed, by God's grace, and how little of it have I laid out for His honour ! On the contrary, how oft have I offended, affronted, and provoked Him, even when He has been courting me with His favours, and daily pouring forth His benefits upon me ! This, alas ! is a sad truth, which, whensoever I seriously reflect upon, I cannot but acknowledge the continuance of my life as the greatest instance of God's mercy and goodness, as well as the greatest motive to my gratitude and obedience. In a due sense, therefore, of the vanities and follies of my younger years, I desire to take shame to myself for what is past, and do, this morning, humbly prostrate myself before the Throne of Grace, to implore God's pardon, and to make solemn promises and resolutions for the future, to " cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armour of light ;" and not only so, but to redeem the precious minutes I have squandered away, by husbanding those that remain to the best advantage. I will not trifle and sin away my time in the pleasure of sense, or the impertinences of business, but shall always employ it in things that are necessary and useful, and proportion it to the weight and importance of the work or business I engage myself in ; allotting such a part of it for this business, and such a part for that, so as to leave no intervals for unlawful or unnecessary actions to thrust themselves in, and pollute my life and conversation. [Rom. 13. 12.]

For since it has pleased God to favour me with the blessing of health, and I am not certain how soon I may be deprived of it, and thrown upon a bed of sickness, which may deprive me of the use of my reason, or make me un-

capable of any thing else but grappling with my distemper ; it highly concerns me to make a due use of this blessing while I have it ; to improve these parts and gifts that God has endowed me with, to the manifestation of His glory, the salvation of my soul, and the public good of the community whereof I am a member.

To these ends, it will be requisite for me frequently to consider with myself, which way my weak parts may be the most usefully employed, and to bend them to those studies or actions which they are naturally the most inclined to, and delighted in, with the utmost vigour and application ; more particularly, in spiritual matters, to make use of all opportunities for the convincing others of God's love to them, and their sins against God, of their misery by nature, and happiness by Christ ; and when the truth of God happens to be any ways traduced or opposed, to be as valiant in the defence of it as its enemies are violent in their assaults against it. And as I thus resolve to employ my inward gifts and faculties for the glory and service of God, so,

RESOLUTION II.

I am resolved, by the Divine grace, to employ my riches, the outward blessings of Providence, to the same end ; and to observe such a due medium in the dispensing of them, as to avoid prodigality on the one hand, and covetousness on the other.

This, without doubt, is a necessary resolution, but it is likewise very difficult to put in practice, without a careful observance of the following rules :—First, never to lavish out my substance, like the prodigal, in the revels of sin and vanity : but, after a due provision for the necessities and conveniences of life, to lay up the overplus for the acts of love and charity toward my indigent brethren. I must consider the uses and ends for which God has intrusted me with such and such possessions ; that they were not given me for the pampering my body, the feeding my lusts, or puffing me up with pride and ambition, but for advancing His glory and my own, and the public good. But why do

I say given, when, as I before observed, I have no propriety in the riches I possess? they are only lent me for a few years, to be dispensed and distributed as my great Lord and Master sees fit to appoint; viz. for the benefit of the poor and necessitous, which He has made His deputies, to call for and receive His money at my hands. And this, indeed, is the best use I can put it to, for my own advantage as well as theirs: for the money I bestow upon the poor, I give to God to lay up for me, and I have His infallible word and promise for it, that it shall be paid me again with unlimited interest, out of His Heavenly treasure, which is infinite, eternal, and inexhaustible. Hence it is, that whensoever I see any fit object of charity, methinks I hear the Most High say unto me, Give this poor brother so much of My stock, which thou hast in thy hand, and I will place it to thy account, as given to Myself; and “Look what thou layest out, and it shall be paid thee again.” [Prov. 19. 17.]

The second rule is, never to spend a penny where it can be better spared; nor to spare it where it can be better spent. And this will oblige me, whensoever any occasion offers of laying out money, considerately to weigh the circumstances of it, and according as the matter, upon mature deliberation, requires, I must not grudge to spend it: or, if at any time I find more reason to spare, I must not dare to spend it; still remembering, that as I am strictly to account for the money God has given me, so I ought neither to be covetous in saving or hoarding it up, nor profuse in throwing it away without a just occasion. The main thing to be regarded, is, the end I propose to myself in my expenses, whether it be really the glory of God, or my own carnal humour and appetite. For instance, if I lay out my money in clothing my body, the question must be, whether I do this only for warmth and decency, or to gratify my pride and vanity? If the former, my money is better spent; if the latter, it is better spared than spent. Again, Do I lay it out in eating and drinking? If this be only to satisfy the necessities of nature, and make my life the more easy and comfortable, it is, without doubt, very well spent; but if it be to feed my luxury and intemperance, it is much better spared; better for my soul in keeping it from sin, and better

for my body in preserving it from sickness. And this rule is the more strictly to be observed, because it is as great a fault in a servant not to lay out his master's money when he should, as to lay it out when he should not.

In order, therefore, to avoid both these extremes, there is a third rule to be observed, under this resolution, and that is, to keep a particular account of all my receipts and disbursements, to set down in a book every penny I receive at the hands of the Almighty, and every penny I lay out for His honour and service. By this means I shall be in a manner forced both to get my money lawfully, and to lay it out carefully; for how can I put that amongst the money I have received from God, which I have got by unlawful means? Certainly such money I may rather account as received from the Devil, for his use, than from God, for His. And so must I either lay every penny out for God, or otherwise I shall not know where to set it down; for I must set down nothing but what I lay out for His use; and if it be not for His use, with what face can I say it was? And by this means also, when God shall be pleased to call me to an account for what I received from Him, I may with comfort appear before Him; and having improved the talents He had committed to my charge, I may be received into His Heavenly Kingdom, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into thy Master's joy."

[Matt. 25.
21.]

RESOLUTION III.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve the authority God gives me over others, to the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, and so for the exaltation of God's Name on earth, and their souls in Heaven.

That all power and authority hath its original from God, and that one creature is not over another, but by the providence and will of Him Who is over all, and, by consequence, that all the authority we have over men is to be improved for God, is clear, not only from that question, "Who made thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" but likewise, and that more clearly from that

1 Cor. 4. 7.

positive assertion, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Rom. 13. 1. That therefore I may follow my commission, I must stick close to my present resolution, even in all the power God gives me, to behave myself as one invested with that power from above, to restrain vice and encourage virtue, as oft as I have an opportunity so to do, always looking upon myself as one commissioned by Him, and acting under Him. For this reason I must still endeavour to exercise my authority as if the Most High God was in my place in person as well as power. I must not follow the dictates of my own carnal reason, much less the humours of my own biassed passion, but still keep to the act which God Himself hath made, either in the general statute-book for all the world, the Holy Scriptures, or in the particular laws and statutes of the nation wherein I live. And, questionless, if I discharge this duty as I ought, whatever sphere of authority I move in, I am capable of doing a great deal of good, not only by my power, but by influence and example. For common experience teaches us, that even the inclinations and desires of those that are eminent for their quality or station, are more powerful than the very commands of God Himself; especially among persons of an inferior rank and more servile disposition, who are apt to be more wrought upon by the fear of present punishment or the loss of some temporal advantage, than any thing that is future or spiritual. Hence it is that all those whom God intrusteth with this precious talent, have a great advantage and opportunity in their hands for the suppressing sin, and exalting holiness in the world: a word from their mouths against whoredom, drunkenness, profanation of the Sabbath, or the like, yea, their very example and silent gestures, being able to do more than the threatenings of Almighty God, either pronounced by Himself in His word, or by His ministers in His holy Ordinances. This, therefore, is my resolution, that whatsoever authority the Most High God shall be pleased to put upon me, I will look upon it as my duty, and always make it my endeavour, to demolish the kingdom of sin and Satan, and establish that of Christ and holiness in the hearts of all those to whom my commission extends; looking more at the duty God expects from me, than at the dignity He

confers upon me. In a word, I will so exercise the power and authority God puts into my hands here, that when the particular circuit of my life is ended, and I shall be brought to the general assize to give an account of 'this' amongst my other talents, I may give it up with joy; and so exchange my temporal authority upon earth for an eternal crown of glory in Heaven.

RESOLUTION IV.

I am resolved, by the Divine grace, to improve the affections God stirs up in others towards me, to the stirring up of their affections towards God.

If the authority I have over others, then questionless the affection others have to me, is to be improved for God; and that because the affection they bear to me in a natural sense hath a kind of authority in me over them in a spiritual one. And this I gather from my own experience; for I find none to have a greater command over me than they that manifest the greatest affections for me. Indeed, it is a truth generally agreed on, that a real and sincere esteem for any person is always attended with a fear of displeasing that person; and where there is fear in the subject, there will doubtless be authority in the object; because fear is the ground of authority, as love is, or ought to be, the ground of that fear. The greatest potentate, if not feared, will not be obeyed; if his subjects stand in no awe of him, he can never strike any awe upon them. Nor will that awe have its proper effects in curbing and restraining them from sin and disobedience, unless it proceeds from and is joined with

^{1 John 4. 18.} love. I know the Scripture tells me, "There is no fear in love, but that perfect love casteth out fear." But that is to be understood of our love to God, not to men, and that a perfect love too, such as can only be exercised in Heaven. There I know our love will be consummate, without mixture, as well as without defect; there will be a perfect expression of love on both sides, and so no fear of displeasure on either. But this is a happiness which is not to be expected here on earth; so long as we are clothed with flesh

and blood, we shall, in one degree or other, be still under the influence of our passions and affections. And therefore as there is no person we can love upon earth but who may sometimes see occasion to be displeased with us; so he will always, upon this account, be feared by us. This I look upon as the chief occasion of one man's having so much power and influence over another.

But how comes this under the notion of a talent received from God, and so to be improved for Him? Why, because it is He, and He alone, that kindles and blows up the sparks of pure love and affection in us, and that by the breathings of His Own Spirit. It was the Lord that gave Joseph favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, and that brought Gen. 39. 21. Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs. And so of all others in the world: for we are told Dan. 1. 9. elsewhere, that as "God fashioneth the hearts of men," so [Ps. 33. 15.] "He turneth them which way soever He will." Insomuch [Prov. 21. 1.] that I can never see any express their love for me, but I must express my thankfulness to God for it: nor can I feel in myself any warmth of affection towards others, without considering it as a talent hid in my breast, which I am obliged in duty to improve for Him, by stirring up their affections unto Him, whose affections Himself hath stirred up toward me. And this will be the more easy to effect, if I take care, in the first place, to express the zeal and sincerity of my own love to God, by making Him the chief object of my esteem and adoration, and manifest my aversion to the sins they are guilty of, by representing them as most loathsome and abominable, as well as most dangerous and damnable. For wherever there is a true and cordial affection to any person, it is apt to bias those that are under the influence of it, to choose the same objects for their love or aversion that such a person does, *i. e.* to love what he loves, and hate what he hates. This, therefore, is the first thing to be done, to stir up the affections of others to love and serve God.

Another way of my improving the affections of others to this end, is by setting them a good example; for commonly what a friend doeth, be it good or bad, is pleasing to us, because we look not at the goodness of the thing which is

done, but at the loveliness of the person that doeth it. And if the vices of a friend seem amiable, how much more will his virtues shine! For this reason, therefore, whensoever I perceive any person to shew a respect for, or affection to me, I shall always look upon it as an opportunity put into my hands to serve and glorify my great Creator, and shall look upon it as a call from Heaven, as much as if I heard the Almighty say to me, ‘I desire to have this person love Me, and therefore have I made him to love thee, do thou but set before him an example of goodness and virtue, and his love to thy person shall induce and engage him to direct his actions according to it.’ This, therefore, is the rule that I fully resolve to guide myself by, with relation to those who are pleased to allow me a share in their esteem and affection, which I hope to improve to their advantage in the end: that as they love me, and I love them now, so we may all love God, and God love us to all eternity.

RESOLUTION V.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every good thought to the producing of good affections in myself, and as good actions with respect to God.

Whatsoever comes from God being a talent to be improved to Him, I cannot but think good thoughts to be as precious talents as it is possible a creature can be blessed with. But let me esteem them as I will, I am sure my Master will reckon them amongst the talents He intrusted me with, and will call me to an account for, and therefore I ought not to neglect them. The Scripture tells me, “I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself, but that my sufficiency is of God.” And if I be not sufficient to think any thing, much less am I able, of myself, to think of that which is good; forasmuch as to good thoughts there must always be supposed a special concurrence of God’s Spirit, whereas to other thoughts there is only the general concurrence of His presence. Seeing, therefore, they come from God, how must I lay them out for Him? Why, by sublimating good thoughts into good affections. Does God

2 Cor. 3. 5.

vouchsafe to send down into my heart a thought of Himself? I am to send up this thought to Him again, in the fiery chariot of love, desire, and joy. Doth He dart into my soul a thought of holiness and purity? I am to dwell and meditate upon it till it break out into a flame of love and affection for Him. Doth He raise up in my spirit a thought of sin, and shew me the ugliness and deformity of it? I must let it work its desired effect, by making it as loathsome and detestable as that thought represents it to be.

But good thoughts must not only be improved to produce good affections in my heart, but likewise good actions in my life. So that the thoughts of God should not only make me more taken with His beauty, but more active for His glory; and the thoughts of sin should not only damp my affection to it, but likewise deter and restrain me from the commission of it.

And thus every good thought that God puts into my heart, instead of slipping out, as it does with some others, without regard, will be cherished and improved, to the producing of good actions; these actions will entitle me to the blessing of God, and that to the Kingdom of glory.

RESOLUTION VI.

I am resolved, by the grace of God, to improve every affliction God lays upon me, as an earnest or token of His affection towards me.

Every thing that flows from God to His servants, coming under the notion of talents, to be improved for Himself, I am sure afflictions, as well as other mercies, must needs be reckoned amongst those talents God is pleased to vouchsafe. Indeed, it is a talent, without which I should be apt to forget the improvement of all the rest; and which, if well improved, itself will “work out for me a far more exceeding 2 Cor. 4. 17. and eternal weight of glory.” It is the non-improvement of an affliction that makes it a curse; whereas, if improved, it is as great a blessing as any God is pleased to scatter amongst the children of men. And therefore it is that God most frequently intrusteth this precious talent with His

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Amos 3. 2. own peculiar people; "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for your iniquities." Those that God knows the best, with them will He intrust the most; if not of other talents, yet be sure of this, which is so useful and necessary to bring us to the knowledge of ourselves and our Creator, that without it we should be apt to forget both. It is this that shews us the folly and pride of presumption, as well as the vanity and emptiness of all worldly enjoyments, and deters us from incensing and provoking Him, from Whom all our happiness, as well as our afflictions, flow. Let, therefore, what crosses or calamities soever befall me, I am still resolved to bear them all, not only with a patient resignation to the Divine will, but even to comfort and rejoice myself in them, as the greatest blessings. For instance, am I seized with pain and sickness? I shall look upon it as a message from God, sent on purpose to put me in mind of death, and to convince me of the necessity of being always prepared for it, by a good life, which a state of uninterrupted health is apt to make us unmindful of. Do I sustain any losses or crosses? The true use of these is to make me sensible of the fickleness and inconstancy of this world's blessings, which we can no sooner cast our eye upon but they immediately "take to themselves wings, and fly away" from us. And so all other afflictions God sees fit to lay upon me, may, in like manner, be some way or other improved for my happiness.

[Prov. 23.
5.]

But besides the particular improvements of particular chastisements, the general improvement of all is the increasing of my love and affection to that God who brings these afflictions upon me. For how runs the 'mittimus,' whereby He is pleased to send me to the dungeon of afflictions? "Deliver such a one to Satan to be buffeted [in the flesh], that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." By this it appears, that the furnace of afflictions, which God is pleased at any time to throw me into, is not heated at the fire of His wrath, but at the flames of His affection to me. The consideration whereof, as it should more inflame my love to Him, so shall it likewise engage me to express a greater degree of gratitude towards Him, when He singles me out, not only to suffer from Him, but for

1 Cor. 5. 5.

Him too. For this is an honour indeed peculiar to the saints of God, which, if He shall be pleased ever to prefer me to, I shall look upon it as upon other afflictions, to be improved for His glory, the good of others, and the everlasting comfort of my own soul.

Thus have I reckoned up the talents God hath or may put into my hands, to be improved for His glory. May the same Divine Being that intrusted me with them, and inspired me with these good resolutions concerning them, enable me, by His grace, to make a due use of them, and carefully to put in practice what I have thus religiously resolved upon.

There are some other mercies which might be set down in the catalogue of talents, as the graces and motions of God's Holy Spirit, and the use of His holy Ordinances, under the ministry of the Gospel ; but these being included and insisted on under several of the foregoing heads, will not require a distinct consideration.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS
UPON A
CHRISTIAN LIFE;
OR,
NECESSARY DIRECTIONS
FOR ITS
BEGINNING AND PROGRESS UPON EARTH,
IN ORDER TO ITS
FINAL PERFECTION IN THE BEATIFIC VISION.

PART II.

PRIVATE THOUGHTS,

&c. &c.

I. THOUGHTS UPON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

IF the principles of the Christian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce! The earth would put on another face, bearing some resemblance to Heaven itself. Idolatry, with all sorts of wickedness and vice, would be every where discountenanced and suppressed; for all would worship the one living and true God, and Him only. There would be no more wars, nor rumours of wars; kingdom would not rise against kingdom, nor nation against nation, but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their subjects at unity among themselves, striving about nothing but which should serve God best, and do most good in the world. Then piety, and justice, and charity, would revive and flourish again all the world over, and particularly in the Church and kingdom to which we belong. Then the prayers would be read twice a-day in every parish as the law requires, and all people would heartily join together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the world. Then all that are of riper years would, at least every Lord's Day, celebrate the memory of the death of Christ, by which their sins are expiated, and the Most High God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father; and as all sorts of people would thus continually worship God in His Own house, so where-soever they are, they would do all they could to serve and honour Him: "whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do," they would "do all to His glory." And as for their fellow-servants, they would all love as brethren, and

[1 Cor. 10.
31.]

[Matt. 7. 12.] every one seek another's good as well as their own: "Whatsoever they would that men should do to them," they would do the same to all other men. In short, all would then

[Tit. 2. 12.] "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," and so walk

[Matt. 7. 14.] hand in hand together in the "narrow way that leads to everlasting life." This would be the happy state of all mankind, if they were but well grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.

But not to speak of other people, we of this nation rarely find any such effect of this religion among ourselves. Though it be as generally professed, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any nation, there are but few that are ever the better for it; the most being here also as bad both in their principles and practices, as they which live in the darkest corners of the earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shined. Though the kingdom in general be Christian, there are many heathens in it, people that

[Eph. 2. 12.] were never christened; many that were once christened, and are now turned heathens again, living as "without God in the world;" many that would still be thought Christians, and yet have apostatized so far as to lay aside both the Sacraments which Christ ordained, and every thing else that can shew them to be so: many that privily bring in damnable heresies, "even denying the Lord that bought them, and so bring upon themselves swift destruction:" many that

2 Pet. 2. 1-3. follow their pernicious ways, "by reason of whom the way of truth is evil-spoken of, and through covetousness, with feigned words, make merchandise of men," as St. Peter foretold.

2 Tim. 4. 3. "Many who will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;" and so fulfil the prophecy of St. Paul. And of those who still continue in the communion of the Church, and in the outward profession of the true Christian faith,

Tit. 1. 16. "There are many, who, although they profess to know God, yet in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Many did I say? I wish I could not say almost all; but alas! it is too plain to be denied.

For, of that vast company of people that are called

Christians in this kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Gospel of Christ—that finish the work that God has given them to do, even glorify Him in the world! How many that refuse or neglect to worship and serve Him upon His Own day! How few that do it upon any other day, when they have any thing else to do! How many that never received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in their whole lives! How few that receive it above two or three times in the year, how often soever they are invited to it! How many are the proud, the passionate, the covetous, the intemperate, the incontinent, the unjust, the profane and impious, in comparison of the humble, and meek, and liberal, and sober, and modest, and righteous, and holy among us! The disproportion is so vastly great, that none but God Himself can make the comparison; so little of Christianity is now to be found amongst Christians themselves: to our shame be it spoken.

It is indeed a matter of so much shame as well as grief, to all that have any regard for the honour of Christ their Saviour, that they cannot but be very solicitous to know how it comes to pass that His doctrine and precepts are so generally slighted and neglected as they are in our days? and how they may be observed better for the future than now they are?—both which questions may be easily resolved; for we cannot wonder that of the many which profess the Christian religion, there are so few that live up to it, when we consider how few are duly instructed in the first principles of it.

The religion which Christ hath revealed to the world, is, by His grace and blessing, settled and established among us, so as to be made the religion of the kingdom in general; and therefore, all that are born in it are, or ought to be, according to His order or institution, soon after baptized, and so made His Disciples or Christians by profession. And the Church takes security of those who thus bring a child to be baptized, that when it comes to be capable of it, it shall be instructed in the Catechism which she for that purpose hath set forth, containing all the principles of that religion into which it was baptized. But, notwithstanding, this hath been neglected for many years, whereby it is come to pass that the far greatest part of the people in this kingdom

know little or nothing of the religion they profess, but only do profess it as the religion of the country where they live. They may, perhaps, be very zealous for it, as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their lives according to it, because they were never rightly informed about it; or, at least not soon enough, before error or sin hath got possession of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always “as children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” And whatsoever sin gets dominion over them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal bodies, so that they obey it in the lusts thereof, in spite of all that can be said to them out of God’s Own Word; for they are no way edified by any thing they hear, in that the foundation is not first laid, upon which they should build up themselves in that most holy faith that is preached to them. The word they hear is a “seed that falls by the way-side,” or “upon a rock,” or else “among thorns,” and so never comes to perfection; their hearts not being prepared beforehand and rightly disposed for it, by having the principles of the doctrine of Christ first infused into them.

[Matt. 13.
4-7.]

This, therefore, being the great cause of that shameful decay of the Christian religion that is so visible among us, we can never expect to see it repaired, unless the great duty of catechising be revived, and the laws that are made about it be strictly observed all the kingdom over: as most certainly they ought to be; not only as they are the laws both of the Church and state under which we live, but likewise for that they are grounded upon the Word of God Himself, Who expressly commands the same thing by His Apostle, saying, “Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

[Eph. 6. 4.]

For here by ‘nurture,’ we are to understand, as the Greek word *παιδεία* signifies, that discipline which parents ought to exercise over their children, to prevent their falling into, or continuing in any wicked course. And by the ‘admonition of the Lord,’ is meant the catechising, or putting them in mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of what He would have them believe and do that they may be saved. For the

original word, *νουθεσία*, which we translate ‘admonition,’ properly signifies ‘catechising’ (*κατηχίζειν νουθετεῖν*, Hesych.); and therefore to catechise or instruct children in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is a duty here laid upon all parents by Almighty God Himself; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord by catechising or teaching them the principles of His religion, they all live in the breach of a plain law, a law made by the Supreme Lawgiver of the world, and must accordingly answer for it at the Last Day.

Wherefore all that are sensible of the great account which they must give of all their actions, at that time, to the Judge of the whole world, cannot but make as much conscience of this as of any duty whatsoever, so as to use the utmost of their care and diligence, that their children may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and so be wise unto Salvation. Neither is this any hard matter for those to do, who live in the communion of the Church, having such a Catechism or summary of the Christian religion drawn up to their hands, which is easy both for parents to teach, and for children to learn; and yet so full and comprehensive, that it contains all things necessary for any man to know in order to his being saved. As you may clearly see if you do but cast your eye upon the method and contents of it; which may be all reduced to these five heads, the ‘Baptismal Vow, the Apostles’ Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments ordained by our Lord Christ.’

It begins where a child begins to be a Christian, and therefore hath a Christian name given him, even at his Baptism, ‘wherein he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.’ Which great privileges belong to all that are baptized, and to none else; none else being in the number of Christ’s Disciples: for our Lord Christ, a little before His ascension into Heaven, left orders with His Apostles, and in them with all that should succeed in the Ministry of the Church to the end of the world, to make all nations His Disciples, by baptizing them “in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy *Matt. 28. 19.*

which they promised to believe, and nothing else; nothing but what is grounded upon plain texts of Scripture, and hath been always believed by the whole Catholic Church in all ages and places all the world over. Here are none of those private opinions and controverted points which have so long disturbed the Church, and serve only to perplex men's minds, and take them off from the more substantial and necessary duties of religion, as we have found by woeful experience; which our Church hath taken all possible care to prevent, by inserting no other articles of faith into the Catechism which her members are to learn, than what are contained in this Creed received and approved of by the whole Christian world; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to "believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost," in Whose Name they were christened, and therefore must continue in this faith, or cease to be Christians.

The other thing which they who are baptized promise, is, "that they will keep God's Commandments," which, therefore, are next taught in the Catechism, without any mixture of human inventions or constitutions; those Ten Commandments, which the Supreme Lawgiver Himself proclaimed upon Mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with His Own finger upon two tables of stone. These they are all bound to learn, because they are bound to keep them all, as they will answer it at the Last Day, when all mankind shall be judged by them.

But no man can keep these Commandments without God's special grace, which we have no ground to expect without praying to Him for it. And, therefore, children are in the next place taught how to pray according to that form which Christ Himself composed, and commanded us to say, *whensoever we pray.* And as he who believes all that is in the Apostles' Creed, believes all that he need believe, and he that keeps all the Ten Commandments doeth all that he need to do; so he that prays this prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: so that in this short Catechism, which children of five years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them, either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The last part of the Catechism is concerning the two Sacraments which Christ hath ordained in His Church, as ‘generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism and the Lord’s Supper:’ both which our Church hath there explained with such extraordinary prudence and caution, as to take in all that is necessary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the disputes that have been raised about them, to the great prejudice of the Christian religion.

Seeing, therefore, this Catechism is so full, that it contains all that any man needs to know, and yet so short that a child may learn it, I do not see how parents can bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of [Eph. 6. 4.] the Lord,” better than by instructing them in it. I do not say by teaching them only to say it by rote, but by instructing them in it, so that they may understand, as soon and as far as they are capable, the true sense and meaning of all the words and phrases in every part of it: for which purpose it will be necessary to observe these rules:—

First, You must begin betime, before your children have got any ill habits, which may be easily prevented, but are not so easily cured. When children are baptized, being “born again of water and of the Spirit,” as the guilt of their [John 3. 5.] original sin is washed away in the “laver of regeneration,” so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it break forth afterwards in actual transgressions; so they receive also the Spirit of God to prevent all such eruptions, by enabling them to resist the “temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil,” to believe and serve God according as they then promised; so far at least, that “sin shall not have dominion Rom. 6. 12, 14. over them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, seeing now they are not under the Law, but under the grace of Christ.” But that the seeds of grace which were then sown in their hearts may not be lost, or stifled, but grow up to perfection, great care must be taken that they may be taught so soon as they are capable to discern between good and evil, to avoid the evil and do the good, and to believe and live as they promised, when they were endued with grace to do it. “Hast thou children?” saith the son of Ecclus. 7. Sirach, “instruct them, and bow down their neck from their 23.

youth." Give thy son no liberty in his youth, and wink not at his follies. "Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat him on the sides while he is a child; lest he wax stubborn, and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart." Whereas "he that gathereth instruction from his youth, shall find wisdom till his old age." According to that of the wise man, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," "as Timothy from a child" had known the "Holy Scriptures." And that was the reason that he was so expert in them when he became a man: which, therefore, that your children may also be, the first thing they learn must be their Catechism, where they are taught all the great truths and duties that are revealed in the Holy Scriptures as necessary to salvation.

But how can such parents do this, that cannot read nor say the Catechism themselves? This, I fear, is the case of too many among us. There are many who, having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or scorn to learn it afterwards, and so lose all the benefit and comfort which they might receive by reading the Holy Scriptures: but this, I confess, is not so necessary, especially in our Church, where the Holy Scriptures are so constantly read in public, that if people would as constantly come and hearken to them, they might be wise unto salvation, although they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at least in the primitive times, when notwithstanding they attained to the knowledge of God, and of their duty to Him, as well as if they had been the greatest scholars in the world. But then considering that they could not read, they supplied that defect by attending more diligently to what they heard out of God's Holy Word, and laying it up in their hearts, so that they understood all the principles of the Christian religion, and were able to instruct their children in the same as well as if they could read. But this is not our case: for now there are many who can neither read nor so much as say the Catechism, having never learned it themselves, and therefore cannot possibly teach it their children. Such as the Apostle speaks of, who "when, for the time, they ought to be teachers," they "have need that one teach them again,

which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." And what must such do? They certainly, as they tender their own good must be doubly diligent in the use of all means that may tend to their edification and instruction; and as they desire the good of their children, they must send them to school, or provide some other person to teach them; which if the parents neglect to do, the godfathers and godmothers of every child should put them in mind of it, and see that the child be taught, so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession, he made by them at his baptism. And that he may know these things the better, they must call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly they must provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, as they are contained in the Church Catechism, and then to bring them to the bishop to be confirmed by him.

But for that purpose, when children have been taught the Catechism, they must be sent to the minister or curate of the parish where they live, that he may examine and instruct them in it: examine them whether they can say it, and instruct them so as to make them understand it. For though the words be all as plain as they can well be made, yet the things signified by those words are many of them so high, that it cannot be expected that children should reach and apprehend them without help, which therefore they must go to their minister for, whose duty and office it is to acquaint them with the full sense and meaning of every word, what is signified by it, and what ground they have to believe it is God's Holy Word. But to do this to any purpose, requires more time than is commonly allowed for it in our days. And that is one great reason there are so few among us that are built up as they ought to be "in their most holy faith." Many refuse or neglect to send their children to be catechized at all: and they who send them, send them so little, and for so little a time, that it is morally impossible they should be much the better for it, as many have found by experience; who, although in their childhood they were taught

the Catechism, and could say it readily, yet having not been sufficiently instructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than if they had never learned it. I wish this be not the case of too many parents : wherefore, that this great work may be done effectually, so as to answer its end, as children should begin as soon as ever they are able to learn the Catechism, and go on by degrees till they can say it perfectly by heart ; so when they can do that, they are still to continue to be instructed in it all along, till they understand it all so well as to be fit to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which usually may be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, more or less, according to their several capacities. By this means, as they grow in years,

2Pet. 3. 18. they would grow also in grace, and " in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." This likewise would be a great encouragement to the minister to take pains with them, when they are such as can understand what he saith to them, and will continue under his care and conduct until they are settled and grounded in the faith, and have their senses exercised to discern between " good and evil ;" and so shall be every way qualified to serve God, and do their duty to Him, " in that state of life to which He shall be pleased" afterwards " to call them" upon earth, and then to go to Heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the kingdom, that all children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and of that religion which He hath revealed to the world, till they are fit for the Holy Communion, and ready to engage in the affairs of the world, the next generation would be much better than this, and Christianity would then begin to flourish again, and appear in its native beauty and lustre. And verily, whatsoever some may think, such especially as were never catechized themselves, this is as great and necessary a duty as any that is required in all the Bible. For God Himself by His Apostle expressly commands all parents to bring up their children in the " nurture and admonition of the Lord ;" that is, as I have shewed, to catechize or instruct them in the principles of the doctrine of our Lord Christ. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a

[Eph. 6. 4.]

known law, yea, of many laws; there being many places in God's Holy Word, where the same thing is commanded, in other terms, by Almighty God Himself, saying, "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." And again, "Therefore shall ye lay up these words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes; and ye shall teach them your children." This is that which He commands also by the wise man, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The word in the original which we translate 'train up,' signifies also to dedicate or devote a child to the service of God, by instructing him how to do it, and exercising him continually in it; and therefore, in the margin of our Bibles, it is translated 'catechize a child;' so that we have here both the necessity and usefulness of this duty: the necessity, in that it is commanded to 'train up,' or catechize a child in the ways of God; and the usefulness, in that what a child is thus taught, will remain with him all his life long.

Seeing, therefore, that God hath laid so strict a command upon all parents, to bring up their children in the knowledge of Himself, and of their duty to Him, they can expect no other, but that He should take particular notice whether they do it or not, and reward or punish them accordingly. As we see in Abraham, what a special kindness had God for him on this account. "Shall I hide from him," saith the Lord, "that thing which I do: seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth shall be blessed in him?" But why had He such an extraordinary favour for Abraham above all other men? God Himself gives us the reason of it, saying, "For I know that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." This was the reason that Abraham was so much in favour, that he was called the "friend of God."

James 2. 23.

And how much God is displeased with parents neglecting to bring up their children in His true faith and fear, and suffering them to grow up and go on in a course of vice and profaneness, appears sufficiently from that severe judgment

which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole house for it, saying
1 Sam. 3. 13, to Samuel, "For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge
14. his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." The execution of which dreadful judgment is left upon record in the Holy Scriptures, as a standing monument and caution to all parents, to take heed how they educate their children.

Be sure the Saints of God in all ages have taken as much care to bring up their children well, as to live well themselves; making as much conscience of this, as of any duty whatsoever which they owe to God: that the children which He hath given them, may answer His end in giving them; that they may not be insignificant ciphers in the world, or as "fruitless trees," that serve only to cumber the ground; but that they may serve and glorify God whilst they are
[Col. 1. 12.] upon earth, so as to be "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light."

And verily all parents would make this their continual care and study, if they minded either their own or their children's good. Many complain, not without cause, that their children are disobedient and undutiful to them; but the cause is chiefly in themselves. When they have neglected their duty to their children, how can they expect their children should perform their duty to them? They were never taught it, how then can they do it? If, therefore, they prove stubborn and obstinate, if they give themselves up to all manner of vice and wickedness; if instead of a comfort they be a grief and trouble to their parents, their parents must blame themselves for it: and when they come to reflect upon it, their sin in neglecting their duty to God and their children in their education, will be a greater trouble to them than any their children can give them. Whereas when parents bring up their children in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," if their children notwithstanding happen to miscarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their duty, and have nothing to answer for upon that account.

But what a mighty advantage would it be to the children themselves to be thus continually put in mind of their baptismal vow, the articles of our faith, the duties of religion, and what else is contained in the Catechism, from their childhood all along till they come to be men or women! Their minds would be then filled with such Divine truths, and with so great a sense of their duty, that there would be no room left for heresy or sin to enter, at least not so as to get possession, and exercise any dominion there. The first impressions that are made upon us are not soon worn out, but usually remain as long as we live: as the wise man observes, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. 22. 6. When one hath been all along from his childhood brought up in the knowledge of God and His Holy Will, it will stick by him so as to be a constant check upon him, to keep him within the compass of his duty in all ordinary cases; and if any thing extraordinary happen to draw him aside, it will make him restless and uneasy till he hath recovered himself, and got into the right way again; and so it will either keep him innocent, or make him penitent. In short, by the blessing of God attending, as it usually doth, this great duty when it is conscientiously performed, it is the best means that parents can use, whereby to breed up their children for Heaven, to make them fellow-citizens with the Saints and of the household of God, both in this world and for ever.

Wherefore, if we have any regard either to our own or to our children's eternal welfare, let us set upon this duty in good earnest; let us bring up our children so long in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord," till they fully know Him, and all that He would have them believe and do, that they may be saved. But we must be sure to teach them by our example as well as instructions; we must not tell them one thing, and do another ourselves; but shew them how to keep the faith and laws of God, by keeping them ourselves before their eyes, all the while we live together upon earth: that when we are all got, one after another, out of this troublesome and naughty world, we and our children may at last meet together in Heaven, and there praise and glorify Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for His grace and truth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After this general instruction in the principles of our holy religion, it will be necessary, as soon as our young Christian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the nature of God, and the great mystery of the Trinity, into which we are all baptized, which therefore shall be my next subject.

II. THOUGHTS UPON THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

THOUGH religion in general be a thing that all men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that men differ so much about, as about the particular acts and exercise of it: for all nations in the world have some religion; but there are scarce two amongst them all that have the same, yea, in one and the same nation too there are divers modes of religion professed and practised. No nation or country in the world but will afford us instances of this; and our own, I think, as many as any other whatsoever. For could we but cast our eyes into the several corners of this land, at this very moment, what variety might we observe in those acts which the several parties amongst us account to be religious! Some we should see sitting silently for a while together, without either speaking or hearing a word spoken, until at length up starts a man or a woman, or some such thing, and entertains them with a discourse made up of censures and malice, blasphemy and nonsense; and this is all the religion they pretend to. Others we should find crowded together in several corners, sometimes praying, sometimes discoursing as it were, sometimes arguing the case with Almighty God, and acquainting Him with what happens in the world, and that with as much confidence and malapertness, as if He was their fellow-creature; and then very gravely walk home and please themselves with a vain conceit that they are more religious than their neighbours. Another sort of people there are amongst us, who are superstitious as the former were slovenly and irreverent in their devotions: for these having been sprinkled with a little holy water, and performed their obeisance to a crucifix or pic-

ture, presently fall a-pattering over Ave Marias and Pater Nosters to themselves, as fast as they can ; whilst the priest in the meanwhile says something too, but the people generally do not know what it is, nor indeed what themselves say, it being all in an unknown tongue. But, howsoever, though they know not what they say, they think that God doth, and therefore satisfy themselves that they have said something, though they know not what, and think that God is well pleased with what they have done, because themselves are so.

Others there are, and, by the blessing of God, far more than all the rest in this nation, who present themselves before the Great Creator and Possessor of the world, in that solemn and reverent manner as the constitutions of our Church direct, humbly confessing their manifold sins against God, begging mercy and pardon from Him, imploring His favour, and praising His Name for all the expressions of His undeserved love to mankind : and all this in our vulgar tongue, that we all understand, and so perform a reasonable service unto God.

And verily, if we consider the institution itself of that religious worship which we thus perform, it is certainly the best that ever was prescribed by any Church, as being most consonant to the general rules of devotion laid down in Scripture, as also most conformable to the discipline and practice of the primitive Church. But we must not think that we serve God aright, because we be present with them that do so. I do not doubt but that there are many amongst us who sincerely endeavour to worship God, whensoever they present themselves before Him in public ; I wish that all of us would do so. But we must still remember, that we should serve the Lord elsewhere as well as at church, and on all other days as well as upon the Lord's Day : and that if we would be truly religious, our whole man must be devoted to the service of God, yea, and our whole time too. We must not think that it is enough to do something, but we must do all things that are required of us ; which, notwithstanding, we can never do, unless we know both that God Whom we ought to serve, and that service which we ought to perform unto Him. And therefore David directs

his son to the right and only way to true religion, saying,
 1 Chron. 28. 9. “And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind:” which words, did we apply them to ourselves, would, by the blessing of God, put us upon sincere endeavours after real and universal obedience to all the commands of God, and persuade us not to content ourselves with vain pretences to, and professions of religion, as most do; but strive to live up unto our profession, and carry and behave ourselves so as becometh those who desire to be religious, and to serve God in good earnest: which that we may do, let us observe the rule and method which David here prescribes to his son; first, to know God, and then to serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

I shall not trouble the reader with any critical division of the words, for they naturally divide themselves into two parts; first, that we should know, and then that we should “serve God with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.”

I. I shall begin with the first, not only because it is first placed, but because it necessarily must precede the second; it being impossible for us to serve God aright unless we know Him: for without this, all our services will be but like the altar which the Athenians dedicated “to the unknown God:” by which inscription they manifested to the world, that they knew that they ought to serve some God, but that they knew not that God Whom they ought to serve. But that we may so know Him as to serve Him aright, I shall first shew what it is of God which we must know in order to our serving Him aright.

1. Therefore he that would serve God aright, must

(1.) Believe and know that “He is;” that is, that there is such a supreme and all-glorious Being in and over the world that we call God, that made, preserves, governs, and disposes of every thing in the world, as seemeth best to Him; and that it is not only probable that there is such a One; but that it is the most certain and necessary truth in the world: without which there would be no such thing as truth or certainty. For, indeed, if God was not, nothing could be, He alone being the basis and foundation of all being in the world, yea, and of all motion too. And there-

fore, "every thing that lives, every thing that moves," nay, Acts 17. 28. "every thing that is," argues God to be; which therefore is the first great truth upon which all the rest depend; without which nothing would be true, much less would our services be so: so that the first thing to be done in order to our serving God, is to "know and believe that He is," and that He ought to be served and adored by us.

(2.) *Secondly*, It is necessary to know His essence too, as well as His existence; what, as well as that He is; what He is in Himself, and what He is to us: that in Himself He is what He is, in and of Himself, the source of all wisdom, the abyss of all power, the ocean of all goodness, the fountain of all happiness, the principle of all motion, and the centre, yea, perfection of all perfections in the world; whose nature or essence is so pure, so glorious, so immense, so infinite, so eternal, so every way perfect, transcendent, and incomprehensible, that the more we think of Him, the more we contemplate upon Him, the more we praise and admire Him, the more we may. And the highest apprehensions that we can have of Him, is still to apprehend Him infinitely higher than all our apprehensions of Him. And therefore, that man best knows God, that knows Him to be beyond His knowledge, and that knows he can never know Him enough.

But we must know too what He is to us, even the Author and Giver of every good thing we have, and Who in Himself is whatsoever we can desire to make us happy; and therefore it is, that in the covenant of grace, when He would assure us that we shall have all things that we can enjoy, He only promises to be "our God," which is as much as we Heb. 8. 10. can desire, and indeed as Himself can promise; for in promising Himself, He hath promised whatsoever He is, whatsoever He hath, whatsoever He doeth, nay, whatsoever He can do, as God. And thus are we to look upon God as the only object of all true happiness, and the only centre wherein all the desires and inclinations of our souls can rest.

(3.) *Thirdly*, It is necessary also to know the several attributes and perfections which He hath revealed of Himself in Scripture; that He is so wise as to know whatsoever

can be known; so powerful as to do whatsoever can be done; so great and glorious in Himself, that we have all just cause to fear Him; so kind and gracious in His Son, that it is our duty also to trust in Him; so true, that whatsoever He says is true, because He saith it; so good, that whatsoever He doeth is good, because He doeth it; so just as to punish every sin that is committed, and yet so merciful as to pardon every sinner that repenteth; that He is pure without mixture, infinite without bounds, eternal without beginning, everlasting without end, and every way perfect without comparison.

(4.) *Fourthly*, We must know also the works of God, what He hath done, wherein He hath manifested Himself to us. But what hath God done? Or rather what hath He not done? It was He that raised this stately fabric of the world we live in out of the womb of nothing. It was He that extracted light out of darkness, beauty and perfection out of a confused chaos. It was He that bedecked the glorious canopy of Heaven with those glittering spangles, the stars. It was He that commanded the sun to run its course by day, and the moon to ride her circuit by night about the world, to shew the inhabitants thereof the glory of their all-glorious Maker. It was He that hung the earth upon nothing, and spread upon the surface of it a curious carpet, embroidered with all manner, not of painted, but real flowers, and plants, and trees. It was He that at first produced all things out of nothing, and it is He that still preserves all things in their being. It is He that orders the affairs of kingdoms, manages the intrigues of state, directs the events of wars, and disposes of every particular person as Himself sees good. In a word, whatsoever was ever made in "Heaven above or on earth beneath," it was He that made it; and whatsoever is still done in "Heaven above or on earth beneath," it is He that doeth it; so that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by Him, as the first and universal cause of all things.

[Exod. 20.
4.]

(5.) *Fifthly*, It is necessary also to know, so as to believe, that though there is but One God, yet there are Three Per-

sons, all and every One of Which is that One God. I do not say it is necessary to understand or comprehend this mystery, for that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the less to believe it, because we cannot understand it: for there are many things in Divinity, yea, many things in natural philosophy, and in geometry itself, which we cannot understand, and yet for all that both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cause have we to believe this, which God Himself hath asserted of Himself? nay, and besides that, we have the same obligations to serve and honour every Person as we have to serve and honour any One Person in the sacred Trinity; our Saviour Himself having expressly told us, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." John 5. 23. But that we cannot do, unless we believe the Son to be God as well as the Father; and by consequence, unless we acknowledge this fundamental article of our Christian faith, into which we were all baptized.

2. *Secondly*, We must consider what kind of knowledge we ought to have of God, in reference to our serving Him aright.

For we must not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that He is wise and powerful, great and glorious, true and faithful, good and gracious; these things a man may know in general, so as to be able to discourse of them, and dispute for them too, and yet come short of that knowledge which is requisite to our true serving of God: which should be such a knowledge as will not only swim in the brain, but sink down into the heart; whereby a man is possessed with a due sense of those things he knows, so that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be so. Thus David, who, in the text, calls upon his son to "know the God of his fathers," intimates elsewhere what knowledge he means; saying, "O taste and see that the Lord is good." [1 Chron. 28. 9.] Ps. 34. 8. Where we may observe, how He requires our spiritual senses to be employed in our knowledge of God, so as to see that He is good, yea, and taste it too; that is, feel and experience it in ourselves; which though it may seem a paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real truth, and attain unto

it, if we be but careful and constant in our meditations upon God, and sincere in performing our devotions to Him ; for by these means our notions of God will be refined, our conceptions cleared, and our affections, by consequence, so moved towards Him, that we shall taste and experience in ourselves, as well as know from others that He is good, and that all perfections are concentrated in Him.

But this practical and experimental knowledge of God doth necessarily presuppose the other, or the general knowledge of Him, so as to be acquainted with the several expressions which God in Scripture hath made use of, whereby to reveal Himself and His perfections to us ; as when He is pleased to call Himself the Almighty God, the all-wise and infinite, the just and gracious God, and the like ; or to say of Himself, “ I am that I am ; ” that is, in and of Myself eternal. Unless we first know that these, and such like expressions, belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impossible for us to arrive at that knowledge of Him which is necessary to our serving Him aright.

[Exod. 3.
14.]

And so I come to the last thing to be considered here concerning the knowledge of God, even that it is necessary to our serving Him ; so that none can serve Him that does not first know Him, and therefore that the method as well as matter of David’s advice is here observable : “ Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve Him ; ” or, first know Him, and then serve Him “ with a perfect heart and a willing mind.”

And verily, one would think that this is a truth so clear, so evident of itself, that it needs no proof or demonstration ; for how is it possible for us to know how to serve God, unless we first know that God Whom we ought to serve ? for all our services unto God should be both proper to His nature, and suitable to His perfections ; and therefore, unless I first know His nature and perfections, how can I adjust my services to them ? As, for example, I am to fear His greatness, and “ trust on His mercy,” and rejoice in His goodness, and desire His favour : but how can I do this, unless I know that He is thus great and merciful, good and favourable ?

Moreover, as a man cannot serve God when he hath a mind to do it, so neither will he have a mind or heart to serve Him, unless he first knows Him. For the motions of the will are always regulated by the ultimate dictates of the practical understanding; so that a man chooses or refuses, loves or hates, desires or abhors, according as he knows any object that is presented to him to be good or evil. And therefore how can I choose God as my chiefest good, unless I first know Him to be so; or love Him as I ought, above all things; unless I first know Him to be better than all things; or perform any true service to Him, unless I first know Him to be such a one as deserves to have true service performed unto Him?

Nay, *lastly*, nothing that we do can be accepted as a service to God, unless it be both grounded upon, and directed by a right knowledge of Him. God would not accept of blind sacrifices under the Law, much less will He accept of blind services now under the Gospel; and therefore He expects and requires now, that whatsoever we do, either to or for Him, be a λογική λατρεία, "a reasonable service." That Rom. 12. 1. our souls as well as bodies, yea, and the rational as well as sensitive part, be employed in all the services which we perform to Him; which certainly cannot be, unless we first know Him; so that there is an indispensable connexion betwixt our knowing and serving God; it being as impossible for any man to serve Him, that doth not first know Him, as it is to know Him aright, and not to serve Him.

But however indispensable this connexion be in its own nature, the Church of Rome can make a shift to dispense with it; yea, so far as to assert that 'ignorance is the mother of devotion.' But you must excuse them, for they do not mean by devotion, as we do, the real serving of God, but only the performing of some outward services to Him. And such a kind of devotion, I confess, ignorance may be the mother of: but a man must be grossly ignorant that thinks this to be devotion, which is but a piece of pageantry, a mocking instead of serving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a dismal, what a dreadful account the heads of that church must hereafter give, for daring to keep the people in so much ignorance as they do; so as to

render them incapable of serving God, that so they may be the more ready to serve the Church ; that is, the interests and designs of the court of Rome.

But let them look to that ; whilst we, in the meanwhile, study to know God before all things else, considering,

(1.) *First*, God therefore made us that we might know Him, and that we might know that He made us. And therefore it is that He hath made rational creatures capable of reflecting upon Him that made us so : neither did He only make us at first, but He still preserves us ; we feed daily at His table, and live upon His bounty. And the very beasts that any of us keep, know those that keep them ; and shall we be more brutish than brutes themselves, and not know Him that keeps and maintains us ? O ! how justly may God then call “ Heaven and earth to witness against us,” as He did once against His people Israel.

Isa. 1. 2-4.

(2.) *Secondly*, There is none of us but have attained to knowledge in other things : some of us have searched into arts and sciences, others are acquainted with several languages ; none of us but are or would be expert in the affairs of this world, and understand the mysteries of our several trades and callings ; what, and shall He alone, by Whom we know other things, be Himself unknown to us ? What is, if this be not, a just cause, wherefore God should infatuate and deprive us of all our knowledge in other things ? seeing we labour more to know them than Him from Whom we receive our knowledge.

Hos. 4. 1.

ver. 6.

(3.) *Thirdly*, “ Ignorance of God ” is itself one of the greatest sins that we can be guilty of, and which God is most angry for. And there God Himself imputes the destruction of His people to the “ want of knowledge.” Nay, and it is that sin too that makes way for all the rest. For what is the reason that many so frequently blaspheme God’s Name, slight His service, transgress His laws, and incense His wrath against them, but merely because they do not know Him, how great, how glorious, how terrible a God He is ! For did they but thus rightly know Him, they could not but regard the thoughts of doing any thing that is offensive to Him ; and therefore the true “ knowledge of God ” would be the best security, and the most sovereign antidote

in the world against the infection of sin, and the prevalency of temptations over us ; neither would it only preserve us from sin, but put us upon duty and service, and direct us also in the performance of it. Insomuch that the hardest duty will be easy to one that knows God ; the easiest will be hard to one that knows Him not. Hard did I say ? yea, and impossible too ; for although a man may know God, and yet not serve Him, it is impossible that any man should serve God unless he knows Him ; knowledge itself being both the first duty that we owe to God, and the foundation of all the rest.

And therefore, to conclude, if any desire to perform the vow they made in their Baptism, ‘ to love and fear,’ to ‘ honour and obey the eternal God ’ that made them : if any desire to be Christians indeed, and “ holy in all manner of conversation ;” if any desire to trust on the promises, and observe the precepts of the great Creator and Possessor of the world, to live above the snares of death, and to antedate the joys of Heaven ; if any desire to live the life and to “ die the death of the righteous,” to serve God here so as to enjoy Him hereafter ; let all such but study the Scriptures, and frequent the public ordinances ; be constant and sincere in prayer and meditation, neglecting no opportunity of acquainting themselves with God, but making use of all means possible to get their hearts possessed with a reverential apprehension of God’s greatness and glory, and with a due sense of His goodness and perfections, and their work will be soon done : for if they thus know God, they will serve Him too with a “ perfect heart and a willing mind.”

[1 Pet. 1.
15.]

[Num. 23.
10.]

[1 Chron.
28. 9.]

II. We have seen how we ought to know God, and we are now to consider how we ought to serve Him ; without which, indeed, our knowledge of Him will avail us nothing. For, as the Apostle argues, “ Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” So here : though we should have the highest notions and speculations in divinity, that men or angels ever had ; though we should understand the highest mysteries in religion, and dive into the profoundest secrets of Christian philosophy ; though we should excel the greatest schoolmen, and the most learned

1 Cor. 13. 1.

doctors that ever lived; and were able to baffle heresies, dispute error and schism out of the Christian Church, and evince the truth of the articles of our faith, by more than mathematical demonstrations; yet, if after all this our knowledge be only notional, not moving our affections, nor putting us upon the practice of what we know, "it is but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal:" it may make a noise in the world, and get us applause amongst men, but it will stand us in no stead at all before the eternal God, yea, it will rise up in judgment against us another day, and sink us lower into the abyss of torments. And therefore, though men may, God doth not look upon this as the true knowledge of Himself. Neither can any one be properly said to know God, that doth not serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. And therefore, having discoursed of that knowledge which is necessary to our serving God, I shall now endeavour to shew how we ought to serve God according to our knowledge.

In speaking unto which, I must beg the reader's most serious and Christian attention, as to a matter which concerns our lives; yea, our eternal lives in another world. I hope there are none of those that pretend to instruct, so brutish and atheistical, as not to desire to serve God: none so proud and self-conceited, as to think that they serve Him well enough already, or at least know how to do it. I write only to such as desire to be instructed, read books of practical religion with no other design but to serve God, and to learn how to serve Him better. And if this be our only design, as I hope it is, let us manifest it to the world, and to our consciences, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon our own hearts. For I may venture to say, that this is the noblest and most necessary subject that I can write, or any one can read of; and that which, if seriously weighed, rightly considered, and truly practised, will most certainly bring us to the highest happiness which our natures are capable of, or our persons were at first designed for. Now, for our clearer proceeding in a matter of so great importance, we will,

1. *First*, Consider what it is to serve God? A question very necessary to be treated of and resolved, because of the

general mistakes that are in the world about it : many people fancying the service of God to consist in some few particular acts ; as in saying their prayers, reading the Scriptures, going to Church, and giving an alms now and then to the poor : especially, if they be but zealous and resolute in the defence of the party or faction they are of, so as to promote it to the highest of their parts, estates, or power, then they think they do God good service, and that this is all He requires of them. Others think they serve God by serving of His creatures, as in praying to saints, bowing to images, and falling down before the eucharist when it is carried in procession : nay, many there are who think they serve God when they dishonour Him, wresting His Scriptures, corrupting His doctrines, opposing His vicegerents, seducing His people and servants into error, and all for the promoting of some temporal interests or groundless opinions. But we must know that the service of God is a thing of a higher nature and nobler stamp than such silly mortals would persuade us it is ; consisting in nothing less than,

(1.) In devoting of ourselves, and all we have, or are, or do, unto the honour of the eternal God ; resigning our hearts wholly to Him, and subduing all our passions and affections before Him. For, seeing we were wholly made by Him, and wholly depend upon Him, if we would serve God at all, we must serve Him with all we are ; every faculty of our souls and member of our bodies employing themselves in those services which He hath set them, so as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's ; His by creation, it was He that made us ; His by preservation, it is He that maintains us ; and His by redemption, it is He that hath purchased us with His Own most precious blood ; and therefore, being thus bought with a price, we should "glorify 1 Cor. 6. 20. God both in our souls and bodies, which are His."

And as we are to serve Him with all we are, so also with all we have. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase." Prov. 3. 9. Whatsoever we have we receive from His bounty, and therefore whatsoever we have we should employ for His glory : our parts, our gifts, our estates, our power, our time ; whatsoever we can call ours, is His in our hands, and therefore to be improved,

[Matt. 25.
15.][Luke 19.
20.]

Matt. 5. 16.

not for ourselves, but Him; as our Saviour shews in the parable of the talents, which the master of the house distributed amongst his servants; "to some he gave one, to some five, to others ten," that every one might employ his proportion to his master's use; neither squandering it away, nor yet "laying it up in a napkin." It is God that is the grand Master and Possessor of the world, Who parcels it out amongst His creatures as Himself sees good; but where-soever He intrusteth any thing, He expects the improvement of it for Himself. And so, I suppose, doth every one of us from such servants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their hands be laid out, not for themselves, but for us; and that they spend their time in our service, not their own: and if they do otherwise, none of us but will say, they do not serve us, but themselves. How then can we expect that God will look upon us as serving Him, when we do not do so much for Him as we expect from our own servants, though our fellow-creatures? or how can we think that we serve Him as we ought, unless we serve Him as much as we can? or that God should look upon us as His servants, unless we employ and improve whatsoever we have, not for our own pleasure, profit, or applause, but for His honour and glory, from Whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's words, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in Heaven."

(2.) Hence the serving of God consisteth also in the performing of sincere and universal obedience to all His laws and commands: which is but the natural consequent of the former; for if our whole man, both soul and body, and whatsoever we have or are, ought to be devoted to His glory, it must needs follow, that whatsoever we do should be conformable to His precepts; which also is no more than every one of us expects from our servants: for those whom we have covenanted with to be our servants, and whom we keep upon that very account, that they may serve us; we all expect that they should observe all our commands, and do whatsoever in justice and by our covenants we can enjoin them. But how much more then must we ourselves be obliged to obey all the laws and precepts of Him that made

us, Whose creatures we are, and Whose servants, by consequence, we ought to be ! I say, ‘all His laws and precepts;’ for we must not think to pick and choose, to do some things, and leave other things undone : for we should take it ill if our servants should serve us so ; if when we send them upon several businesses, they should mind only one of them, and neglect all the other, we should questionless look upon them as very idle and careless servants : but let us consider and bethink ourselves, whether we have not served our Master, the eternal God, as bad as our servants have, or can serve us. He hath given us several laws to observe, and hath set us several works to do, and we perhaps can make a shift to do something that is required of us ; but never think of the other, and perhaps the principal things too that He expects from us.

Just as if, when Moses had broken the two tables of stone whereon the Ten Commandments were written, one man should have come and snatched away one piece, a second run away with another piece, and a third with another, until at length ten several persons had gotten ten several pieces whereon the Ten Commandments were severally written ; and when they had done so, every one of them should have striven to keep the Law that was written on his own piece, never minding what was written on the others. Do you think that such persons as these are could be reputed the servants of God, and to observe His laws, when they minded only one particular branch or piece of them ? The case is our own ; we hearing of several laws and commands, which the Most High God hath set us, get some one of them by the end, and run away with that, as if we were not concerned in any of the rest. But let us still remember, that the same finger that wrote one of the commands, wrote all the other too. And, therefore, he that doth not observe all, as well as one, cannot properly be said to observe any at all. Neither, indeed, doth he serve God in any thing : for though he may do something that God requires, yet it is plain that he doth not therefore do it because God requires it ; for if he did so, he would do all things else too that God requires. And therefore such a person doth not serve God at all in what he doeth ; no, he serves himself

[Exod. 32.
19.]

rather than God, in that he doeth it not in obedience to God, but with respect to himself, as to get himself a name and credit amongst men, or perhaps to satisfy his troublesome conscience, which would not let him be at quiet unless he did it.

Ps. 119. 6.

Luke 1. 6.

[1 Chron.
28. 9.]

But now one that would serve God indeed, hath "respect to all His Commandments," "and walks in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless," as Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have done. And thus whosoever would serve the Lord in any thing must serve Him in all things that He requireth. And this is that which David means in this advice to his son, saying, "Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve Him:" that is, observe and do whatsoever He enjoins, and that too with "a perfect heart and a willing mind." And so I come,

2. To the second thing to be considered here; that is, the manner how we ought to serve God, "even with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."

(1.) *First*, "With a perfect heart;" that is, with integrity and sincerity of heart, not from any by-ends, or sinister designs, but out of pure obedience to the laws of God, as He is the Sovereign of Heaven and earth, and in Christ, our Lord and our God:—a thing much to be observed in all our services, without which, indeed, they are no services at all. Insomuch that should we pray our tongues to the stumps, and fast our bodies into skeletons; should we fill the air with sighs, and the sea with tears for our sin; should we spend all our time in hearing of sermons, and our whole estates in relieving the poor; should we hazard our lives, yea, give our bodies to be burnt for our religion, yet nothing of all this would be accepted as a service unto God, unless it be performed out of a sincere obedience to His laws, and with a single eye aiming at nothing but His glory, which

1 Cor. 10. 31.

ought to be the ultimate end of all our actions.

(2.) *Secondly*, We must not only serve God "with a perfect heart," but with a "willing mind" too, רְנָנָהּ רַחֲמָנָהּ properly "with a willing soul;" that is, our will and all the affections of our souls should be carried after and exercised in the service of Almighty God. Our desires are to be inflamed towards it, our love fixed upon it, and our delight

placed in it. Thus the Israelites are said to have “sought the Lord with their whole desire.” And we are commanded to “love the Lord our God,” and so “to serve Him with all our heart, and with all our soul;” yea, we are to “delight to do the will of God,” as our Saviour did, saying, “It is My meat to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” Thus are we to esteem the service of God above our necessary food, pleasing ourselves in pleasing Him, and so make His service not only our business, but our recreation too; and whosoever doeth not so, whatsoever he doeth for God, he cannot be said to serve Him, because he doeth it against his will, and against the bent and inclination of his soul. And therefore, though, as to the outward act, he may do that which God commands, yet inwardly he doeth it not, because his soul is still averse from it; by which means it ceaseth to be the service of God; because it is not performed by the whole man, even soul and body, both which are necessarily required in our performance of real service to Him that made them both.

(3.) *Thirdly*, What is the reason why we ought to serve God so? Because “He searcheth the hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts:” that is, He is thoroughly acquainted with every thought in our hearts, and with every motion and inclination of our souls, infinitely better than ourselves are. And therefore it is in vain for us to think to put Him off with outward and formal, instead of inward and real service: for he doth not only see what we do, but knows too what we think while we are doing of it: and doth not only observe the matter of our actions, but the manner also of our performing them: it being His great prerogative to “search the heart, and to try the reins, and to have all things naked and open unto Him,” so that He seeth what the soul doeth within doors, in the secret closets of the heart, as clearly as what it doeth without in the open streets of the world: every affection of the soul being as manifest unto Him as the actions of the body are; and therefore hypocrisy is the most foolish and ridiculous sin imaginable, making as if we could cheat and deceive God, and hide our sins from the all-seeing eyes of Omniscience itself, or make God believe that we are holy, because we appear to be so to men.

2 Chron. 15. 15.

Deut. 11. 13.

Ps. 40. 8.

John 4. 34.

[1 Chron. 28. 9.]

Heb. 4. 13.

But to bring this home more closely to ourselves: we have been all at church, perhaps, performing our service and devotions to Him that made us; it is true, as to our outward appearance, there hath been no great difference betwixt us, we have been equally present at these public ordinances, and we do not know but one hath prayed and heard the Word of God both read and preached as well as another; so that seemingly our services are all alike as to us; but are they so to God too? That I much question: for He hath taken especial notice all along, not only of the outward gestures of our bodies, but likewise of the inward behaviour of our hearts and souls before Him; and therefore, as I hope He hath seen many of us serving Him with a “perfect heart and a willing mind;” so I fear He hath found too many of us tardy, “coming before Him as His people come, and sitting before Him as His people sit,” while our hearts in the meantime have been about our covetousness; and hath plainly seen, though our bodies have been at church, our souls have been elsewhere, thinking upon our relations, or estates, or something or other besides what our thoughts should have been employed about in so solemn a duty as the public worship. But know this, “O vain man, whosoever thou art, that God will not be mocked:” and though thou hast not seen, or perhaps so much as thought of Him, He hath seen thee and thy thoughts too; yea, at this very moment looks upon thee. And what wilt thou answer Him, the Great Judge of the whole world, when He shall tell thee to thy face, and call His Omniscience to witness, that He saw thee at this, as at other times play the hypocrite with Him, making as if thou servedst Him, when thou servedst Him not; and instead of serving Him “with a perfect heart and a willing mind,” servedst Him neither in heart nor mind. Let us all remember this when we approach God’s house, and also bethink ourselves afterwards, whether we have not been guilty of this sin! if we have, we may be sure God knows it, and we shall hear of it another day. But to prevent what justly may be our doom, let us repent of our former neglects in this kind; and, for the future, whensoever we are serving God, let us still look upon Him as looking upon us, and fix in our hearts this one thing, “That God knows all things in the world.” And therefore let us not think to put God off with

[Ezek. 33.
31.]

such careless and perfunctory services as heretofore too many of us have done ; but if we desire to serve Him at all, let us serve Him “ with a perfect heart and a willing mind.”

Thus I have endeavoured to shew both what it is to serve God, and how we ought to do it : now let us not think it sufficient that we know how to serve God, unless we serve Him according to our knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour’s words : “ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” Which happiness, that all who read this may attain unto, let me advise them, in the Name of the Eternal God that made them, to renounce and forsake their former masters, sin, Satan, and the world, whoever may have hitherto been enslaved by them, and now dedicate themselves wholly to the service of Him that made them for that very purpose that they may serve Him ; yea, and Who hath composed our natures so that the highest happiness we are capable of consists in our serving Him : and therefore let us not think that He calls upon us to serve Him because He wants our service : no, be it known unto all, that He is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of His Own perfections, and needs not the services of such poor silly mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from Him : and therefore He doth not call upon us to serve Him because He cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without Him : not because He wants our service, but because we want it ; it being impossible for us to be happy, unless we be holy ; or to enjoy God, unless we serve Him. John 13. 17.

Wherefore, all ye that desire to go to Heaven, to have Him that made you reconciled unto you, and smile upon you ; or that desire to be really and truly happy, set upon the work which God sent you into the world about ; put it not off any longer, and make no more vain excuses, but from this day forward let the service of God be your daily, your continual employment and pleasure ; study and contrive each day how to advance His glory and interest in the world, and how you may walk more strictly, more circumspectly, more conformably to His laws than ever. But whatsoever service you perform unto Him, be sure to do it “ with a perfect heart and a willing mind.” Think not to

[Jer. 17.
10.]

put Him off with fancy instead of faith, or with outward performances instead of real duties: but remember that He “searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins of the sons of men,” and observes the inward motions of the soul, as well as the outward actions of the life: and therefore, where-soever you are, whatsoever you do, still bethink yourselves, that He that made you still looks upon you; taking notice not only of the matter of the actions which you perform, but also of the manner of your performing them; and therefore be sure to have a special care in all your services for or unto God, that your hearts be sincere before Him, and your minds inclined to Him, that so you may “serve Him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.”

[Luke 19.
42.]

But to conclude; whoever you are that read this discourse, I have here shewn you the “things that belong unto your everlasting peace,” having acquainted you with the method and manner of your serving God in time, in order to your enjoyment of Him to eternity; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be resolved to practise it, yea, or no, it is only the Eternal God that knows. But this I know, that if you will not be persuaded to serve God, yea, and to serve Him too “with a perfect heart and a willing mind,” you will one day wish you had, but then it will be too late. And therefore, if you will put it to the venture, go on still, and with the unprofitable servant, “hide your talents in a napkin,” or lavish them out in the revels of sin and vanity; let thy belly be still thy god, and the world thy lord; serve thyself or Satan, instead of the Living God: “but know that for all this God will bring thee into judgment;” after which, expect nothing else but to be overwhelmed with horror and confusion to eternity.

[ver. 20.]

[Eccles. 11.
9.]

[1 Cor. 15.
58.]

Whereas, on the other side, such amongst you as shall sincerely endeavour from henceforth to serve God “with a perfect heart and a willing mind,” I dare, I do assure them in the Name of God, their “labour shall not be in vain in the Lord:” for God suffers not His enemies to go unpunished, nor His servants unrewarded.

And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the service of so great and so good a Master, and devote yourselves

wholly to His service, and employ your talents faithfully for His glory. Remember the time is but short; and Christ Himself will receive you into eternal glory, saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

III. THOUGHTS UPON THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY.

THOUGH there be many in the world that seem to be religious, there are but few that are so: one great reason whereof is, because there are so many mistakes about religion, that it is a hard matter to hit upon the true notion of it: and therefore, desiring nothing in this world so much as to be an instrument in God's hand to direct men into the true religion, my great care must, and by the blessing of God shall be, to instil into them right conceptions of Him, that is the only object of all religious acts, without which it is impossible to continue, or indeed to be religious: the true nature and notion of religion consisting in the right carriage and deportment of our whole man, both soul and body, towards Him that made us: Whom, therefore, unless we truly know, we can never be truly religious; and therefore they that begin their religion with zeal and passion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they should end: our zeal for God, and love unto Him, being the highest acts of religion, and therefore cannot be the first; but they necessarily presuppose the true knowledge of God, without which our zeal will be blind, and our love both groundless and transient.

But as it is impossible to be truly religious unless we know God, so it is very difficult so to know Him as to become truly religious. It is true that there is such a Supreme Being in and over the world as we call God; the very light of nature teaches, and reason itself demonstrates it to be most certain and undeniable. But what He is, and what apprehensions we ought to have of this glorious Being, none but Himself is able to describe and manifest unto us; so that our conceptions of Him are still to be regulated by

the discoveries that He hath made of Himself to us; without which, though we may have some confused notions of Him, yet we can never so know Him as to serve Him faithfully, and by consequence be truly religious.

Hence, therefore, if we would know God, we must search the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, wherein God hath been pleased most clearly to manifest and discover Himself unto us: I say, both the Old and New Testaments, for otherwise our knowledge of God may be very defective and erroneous, there being several things which God, in the New Testament, hath most plainly revealed of Himself, which in the Old Testament are more darkly and obscurely delivered to us. As, for example, the great mystery of the Trinity; though it be frequently intimated in the Old Testament, yet it is a hard matter rightly to understand it without the New: insomuch that the Jews, though they have had the Law above three thousand, and the Prophets above two thousand years among them, yet to this day they could never make this an article of faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans, still assert, "That God is only One in Person as well as nature:" whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Testament than that there is but One God, and yet there are Three Persons, every One of Which is that one God: and so that though God be but One in nature, yet He is Three Persons; and so Three Persons, as yet to be but One in nature.

And verily, although there was no other text in all the Scripture, whereon to ground this fundamental article of our Christian faith, that, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is a sufficient foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, necessary to be believed concerning the glorious Trinity, but what may easily and naturally be deduced from these words; which were spoken, it is true, by our Saviour before His ascension, but I question whether they were thoroughly understood till after the Holy Ghost was come down to earth: it being only by God Himself that we can come to the true knowledge of Him, much less are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe Three Persons in the Godhead, without the assist-

ance of One of them, that is, of the Holy Ghost, by Whom the other Two are wont to work; He being the issue, if I may so say, and breath of both. Hence it is, that the wisdom of the Church, for these many centuries, hath thought fit to order that this great mystery be celebrated the next Lord's Day after the commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming down upon the Disciples, and in them, upon all true believers; both because all Three Persons have now manifested Themselves to mankind; the Father in His creation of them, the Son in His conversing with them, and the Holy Ghost by His coming down upon them: and also to shew, that it is only by the grace and assistance of God's Spirit that we can rightly believe in this glorious and incomprehensible mystery which our Saviour hath so clearly revealed to us in these words, "Go ye, and teach all nations," &c.

For the opening of which, we must know that our Saviour, in the foregoing verse, acquaints His Disciples, that now all power was given Him "in Heaven and in earth;" by virtue whereof He here issueth forth His commission to His Apostles, and in them to all that should succeed them, to supply His room, and be His vicegerents upon earth, He being now to reside in His Kingdom of Heaven. For, saith He, "All power is given to Me in Heaven and earth: go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." As He also saith elsewhere to them, "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." As if He should have said, 'My Father John 20. 21. having committed to Me all power and authority both in Heaven and earth, I therefore authorize and commissionate, yea, and command you to go and teach all nations,' &c.

This, therefore, is part of the commission which our Lord and Master left with His Apostles immediately before He parted from them; those being the last words which St. Matthew records Him to have spoken upon earth; and therefore they must needs contain matter of very great importance to His Church; and it must needs highly concern us all to understand the true meaning and purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I shall observe the same method and order as He did in speaking them.

I. *First*, Therefore, here is the work He sends the Apostles about; "Go ye, therefore, and teach;" *πορευθέντες οὖν*

μαθητεύσατε, which more properly may be rendered, “Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations,” or “make the persons of all nations to be My disciples,” that is, Christians. That this is the true meaning of the words is plain and clear, from the right notion of the word here used, μαθητεύω, which coming from μαθητής, ‘a disciple,’ it always signifieth either to be or to make disciples, wheresoever it occurs in all the Scriptures; as μαθητευθεῖς, Matt. xiii. 52, which is ‘instructed,’ say we; the Syriac better, ܡܕܢܬܐܝܬܐ, that is, made a disciple, a ܡܠܬܝܕܐ, that is, not only a scholar or learner, but a follower or professor of the Gospel, here called the Kingdom of Heaven. Another place where this word occurs is Matt. xxvii. 57, ἐμαθήτευσε τῷ Ἰησοῦ, where we rightly translate it, ‘was Jesus’ disciple.’ Another place is Acts, xiv. 21, καὶ μαθητεύσαντες ἱκανοῦς, which we improperly render, ‘having taught many;’ the Syriac and Arabic, more properly, ‘having made many disciples.’ And these are all the places in the New Testament where this word is used, except those I am now considering, where all the Eastern languages render it according to its notation, ‘disciple.’ The Persian paraphrastically expounds it, ‘Go ye and reduce all nations to My faith and religion.’ So that whosoever plead for any other meaning of these words, do but betray their own ignorance in the original languages, and by consequence in the true interpretation of Scripture.

I should not have insisted so long upon this, but that the false exposition of these words hath occasioned that no less dangerous than numerous sect of Anabaptists in the world; for the old Latin translation having it, ‘*Euntes ergo, docete omnes gentes;*’ hence the German, where Anabaptism first began, and all the modern translations, render it as we do, “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.” From whence it was supposed by some that were not able to dive into the true meaning of the words, that our Saviour here commanded that none should be baptized but such as were first taught the principles of the Christian religion; which is the greatest mistake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not speak one word of teaching before Baptism, but only after (verse 20, διδάσκοντες); His meaning being only that His Apostles should go about the world and persuade all nations to forsake their former idolatries and supersti-

tions, and to turn Christians or the disciples of Jesus Christ ; and such as were so, should be baptized. And therefore infant-baptism is so far from being forbidden, that it is expressly commanded in these words ; for all disciples are here commanded to be baptized ; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptized, because disciples. And seeing all disciples are to be baptized, so are infants too, the children of believing parents ; for they are disciples as well as any other, or as well as their parents themselves ; for all that are in covenant with God must needs be disciples : but, that children were always esteemed in covenant with God, is plain, in that God Himself commanded the covenant should be sealed to them, as it was all along by Circumcision. But that children were disciples as well as others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, saying of children, “ of such is the Kingdom of God.” Mark 10.14. And therefore they must needs be disciples, unless such as are not disciples can belong to the Kingdom of God, which a man must be strangely distempered in his brain before he can so much as fancy.

And besides that, children, so long as children, are looked upon as part of their parents ; and therefore as their parents are, so are they : if their parents be Heathen, so are the children : if the parents be Jews, so are the children : if the parents be Christian, so are the children too ; nay, if either of the parents be Christian or disciple, the children of both are denominated from the better part, and so looked upon as Christians too, as is plain. “ But now are they holy,” 1 Cor. 7. 14. that is, in a federal or covenant sense, they are in covenant with God ; they are believers, Christians, or disciples, because one of their parents is so.

Now seeing children are disciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all disciples to be baptized, it necessarily follows that children must be baptized too. So that the opinion which asserts, that children ought not to be baptized, is grounded upon a mere mistake, and upon gross ignorance of the true meaning of the Scripture, and especially of this place, which is most ridiculously mistaken for a prohibition, it being rather a command for infant-baptism.

But I must crave the reader's excuse for this digression from the matter principally intended, though I could not tell

how to avoid it; nothing being more needful than to rescue the words of our blessed Saviour from those false glosses and horrible abuses which these last ages have put upon them, especially it coming so directly in my way as this did.

II. *Secondly*, Here is the extent of their commission, which is very large indeed, not being directed to some few particular persons, but to nations; nor to some particular nations only, but to all nations; "Go ye, therefore, and disciple all nations;" or all the world, as it is, Mark xvi. 15. This was that which the Prophet Isaiah, or rather God by him, foretells, which our Saviour Himself seems to have respect unto. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this, that though the Jews hitherto had been the only people of God, and none but they admitted into covenant with Him, now the Gentiles also are to be brought in and made confederates or co-partners with them in the covenant of grace; that the partition-wall being now broken down, the Gospel is to be preached to all other nations, as well as the Jewish; [ch. 2. 32.] Christ being now come to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles," as well as "the glory of His people Israel."

But though the words of the commission be so clear to this purpose, yet the Apostles themselves understood it not, till God had interpreted it from Heaven to St. Peter, shewing him in a vision that he should call no man "common or unclean." From which time forward, he, with the rest of the Apostles, observed their commission exactly in preaching to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. And this was one end wherefore the Holy Ghost came down amongst them, even to enable them to do what their Master had commanded them; for He had here commanded them to preach unto all nations; but that they could not do, unless they could speak all languages, which, therefore, the Holy Acts 10. 28. Ghost enabled them to do, which also is a clear demonstration of the true meaning and purport of these words: for there was no necessity that the Spirit should teach the Apostles all languages, but that the Son had first enjoined them to preach unto all nations. Acts 2. 4, 5.

III. *Thirdly*, Here is the manner whereby they are to admit all nations into the Church of Christ, or into the Christian religion, by baptizing them "in the Name of the

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For the opening whereof we must know that Baptism was a rite in common use amongst the Jews before our Saviour's time, by which they were wont to admit proselytes into their religion, baptizing them "in the Name of the Father," or of God. A little before our Saviour's appearance in the world, John Baptist being sent to "prepare the way" for Him, baptized the Jews themselves, as many as came unto him, in the Name of the Messiah to come, which was called 'the Baptism of Repentance.' "I indeed baptize you," says Matt. 3. 11. he, "with water to repentance : but He that comes after me is mightier than I," &c. But when our Saviour was to go to Heaven, He left orders with His Apostles to make disciples, or admit all nations into the religion that He had preached, confirmed with miracles, and sealed with His Own blood, by baptizing them "in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost;" which form of Baptism, questionless, His Apostles faithfully observed all along, as may be gathered also from Acts, xix. 2, 3, where we may observe how when they said that they "had not so much as heard of an Holy Ghost," he wondering at that, asked them, "Unto what, then, were ye baptized?" plainly intimating, that if they had been baptized aright, according to Christ's institution, they could not but have heard of the Holy Ghost, because they had been baptized in the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But, verse 5, as also Acts, ii. 38, chap. viii. 16, we read of "Baptism administered in the Name of the Lord Jesus;" from whence some have thought that the Apostles baptized only the Gentiles "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," but the Jews "in the Name of the Lord Jesus" only : because, they believing in the Father already, if they were baptized in the Name of Jesus, and so testified their belief that He was the Messiah, they could not but believe in His Spirit too: but this expression of baptizing in the Name of the Lord Jesus, seems to me rather to intimate that form of Baptism which the Lord Jesus instituted : for, doubtless, the Apostles observed the precepts of our Lord better than so as to do it one way, when He had commanded it to be done another ; and baptized only in the Name of Jesus, when He had en-

joined them to baptize in the "Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Neither did the Church ever esteem that Baptism valid, which was not administered exactly according to the institution, in the Name of all the Three Persons; which the primitive Christians were so strict in the observance of, that it was enjoined, that all persons to be baptized should be plunged three times into the water, first at the "Name of the Father," and then at the "Name of the Son," and lastly, at the "Name of the Holy Ghost;" that so every Person might be distinctly nominated, and so our Saviour's institution exactly observed in the administration of this Sacrament. Hence also it was, that all persons to be baptized were always required either with their own mouths, if adult, or if infants, by their sureties, to make a public confession of their faith in the Three Persons into Whose Names they were to be baptized: for this indeed was always looked upon as the sum and substance of the Christian religion, to "believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost;" and they who believed in these Three Persons were still reputed Christians; and they who did not were esteemed infidels or heretics. Yea, and our Saviour Himself hath sufficiently declared how necessary it is for us to believe this great mystery; as also how essential it is to a Christian, seeing that He requires no more in order to our initiation into His Church, but only that we be baptized "in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." In which words we may observe:

I. *First*, A 'Trinity of Persons,' into Whose Names we are baptized, the 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' This is that mystery of mysteries which is too high for human understandings to conceive, but not too great for a Divine faith to believe; even that although there be but One God, there are Three Persons, 'the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,' every one of which is that One and the self-same God: and therefore it is that Baptism is here commanded to be administered in the Name of all Three.

Now to confirm our faith in this great mystery, whereinto we were all baptized, I shall endeavour to shew in few terms what grounds we have in Scripture to believe it. For which

end we must know, that though this great mystery hath received great light by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon the world, yet it did not lie altogether undiscovered before; "yea, from the very foundation of the world," the Church, in all ages, hath had sufficient ground whereupon to build their faith on this great and fundamental truth: for in the very creation of the world, He that created it is called אלהים in the plural number: and in the creation of man He said, "Let Us make man in Our Own image;" [Gen. 1. 26.] from whence, though not a Trinity, yet a plurality of persons is plainly manifested; yea, in the beginning of the world too, we find both Father, Son, and Spirit, concurring in the making of it. For,

(1.) *First*, It is said that "God created Heaven and earth," and then that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." There are two Persons, God and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the world by His Word: "He said, Let there be light; and there was light;" from which expression St. John himself concludes, "That all things were made by the Son of God," or "His Word," and so does St. Paul, Col. i. 16. Gen. 1. 2. John 1. 3.

(2.) Thus we read afterwards, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by Me, and His Word by My tongue," where we have "Jehovah, the Spirit of Jehovah," and the "Word of Jehovah," plainly and distinctly set down. As also in Psalm xxxiii. 6, and Isa. xlii. 1, where there is the Lord speaking of His Son, and saying, that "He will put His Spirit upon Him;" and this also seems to be the reason why the holy Angels, when they praise God, say, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts," saying holy thrice, in reference to the Three Persons they adore. 2Sam. 23. 2. Isa. 6. 3; Rev. 4. 8.

(3.) Thus we might discover this truth in the Old Testament; but in the New we can scarce look over it. For when Jesus was baptized, had we, who know nothing but by our senses, been present at this time with Jesus at Jordan, our very senses would have conveyed this truth to our understandings, whether we would or no. Here we should have heard a 'voice from Heaven;' whose was it but 'God the Father?' Here we should have seen one coming out of Jordan; who was that but 'God the Son?' Here we should

have seen something else too in the form of a dove; who was that but 'God the Spirit?' Thus was 'God the Father' heard speaking; 'God the Son' was seen ascending out of the water; and 'God the Holy Ghost' descending from Heaven upon Him. The first was heard in the sound of a voice, the second was seen in the form of a man, and the third was beheld in the shape of a dove.

Voce Pater, natus Corpore, flamen Ave.

But there are many such places as this all the New Testament over, where the Three Persons of the Godhead are distinctly mentioned, as Luke i. 35; John xiv. 16, 26; chap. xvi. 7; Gal. iv. 6. But the words of St. Paul are very remarkable too, 2 Cor. xiii. 14; and yet "that all these Persons were but One God," St. John expressly asserts, Gen. 18. 2, 3; John 10. 30. 1 John 5. 7. saying, "There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, and these Three are One," which certainly are as plain and perspicuous terms as it is possible to express so great a mystery in. But I need not have gone so far to have proved that there are Three distinct Persons in the Godhead; the words I am treating of being a sufficient demonstration of it: for as all the Three Persons met together at our Saviour's Baptism, so doth our Saviour here command, that all His disciples be baptized in the Name of all Three: and therefore I cannot but admire how any one should dare to profess himself to be a Christian, and yet deny or oppose the sacred Trinity, into which he was baptized when he was made a Christian: for, by this means he, renouncing his baptism, blasphemes Christ, unchristians himself, blotting his own name out of the catalogue of those who were made Christians only by being baptized "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

2. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every Person in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: for here we see Divine worship is to be performed to them all; and all that profess the true religion must be baptized in the Name of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father; which certainly would be the greatest absurdity, yea, the most horrid impiety imaginable, were not they God as well as He.

For if they be not God, they are creatures ; if they be creatures, reason as well as Scripture forbids the same honour and worship to be conferred on them, which is given to God Himself, and only due to Him ; which here, notwithstanding, we see is given to them, and that by our Lord Himself, commanding Baptism to be administered in His Own Name and in the Name of the Holy Ghost, as well as in the Name of the Father, and so making Himself and the Spirit equal sharers in the same honour that is given to the Father. So that, was there no other place in the whole Scripture to prove it, this alone would be sufficient to convince any gainsayer, that the Son and Spirit are God, as well as the Father, or rather the same God with Him. But that I may unveil this mystery, and confirm this truth more clearly, we will consider each person distinctly, and shew that one as well as the other is really and truly God.

(1.) That the Father is God, none ever denied it, and therefore we need not prove it. But, if the Father be God, the Son must needs be God too ; for the same names, properties, works, and worship, which in Scripture are ascribed to the Father, are frequently ascribed to the Son also in Scripture ; the Father is called Jehovah in Scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 7 ; Jer. xxiii. 6 : the Father is called God, so is the Son ; “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word John 1. 1. was with God, and the Word was God ;” with God, as to His person ; God, as to His nature. So also, John xx. 28 ; Acts xx. 28, &c. Moreover, is the Father Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last ? So is the Son, Rev. i. 8. Is the Father eternal ? So is the Son, Isa. ix. 6 ; Rev. i. 8. Is the Father Almighty ? So is the Son, Heb. i. 3. Is the Father every where ? So is the Son, Matt. xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things ? So doth the Son, John xxi. 17 ; chap. ii. 24. Did the Father make all things ? So did the Son, John i. 3. Doth the Father preserve all things ? So doth the Son, Heb. i. 3. Doth the Father forgive sins ? So doth the Son, Matt. ix. 6. Is the Father to be worshipped ? So is the Son, Heb. i. 6. Is the Father to be honoured ? So is the Son, John v. 23. No wonder, therefore, that Christ, being thus in the “ form of God, thought it no robbery to be Phil. 2. 6. equal with God.” He did not rob God of any glory, by

saying Himself was equal to Him. The greatest wonder is, how any one can believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and yet deny this great truth, than which nothing can be more plain from Scripture; nothing being more frequently and more clearly asserted than this is. And verily it is well for us that it is so; for if Christ was not God, neither could He be our Saviour; none being able to free us from our sins, but only He against Whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Christ's divinity, and yet expect pardon and Salvation from Him: all our hopes and expectations from Him depending only upon His assumption of our human nature into a Divine Person.

(2.) And that the Holy Ghost also is God, is frequently asserted in the Holy Scriptures, which Himself indited. Indeed this very inditing of the Scriptures was a clear argument of His Deity, as well as the Scriptures indited by Him. What man, what Angel, what creature, who but God, could compose such articles of faith, enjoin such Divine precepts, foretell and fulfil such prophecies as in Scripture are contained? Who spake unto or by the Prophets? Whom did they mean when they said, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts?" Who was this Lord of Hosts that instructed them what to speak or write? Was it "God the Father," or "God the Son?" No, but it was "God the Holy Ghost:" "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost, therefore, being the Lord of Hosts, He must needs be God; there being no person that is or can be called the Lord of Hosts, but He that is the Very and Eternal God.

This also may be gathered from 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" for none can be the Temple of God, but he in whom God dwells; for it is God's dwelling in a place that makes that place the Temple of God; and yet we are here said to be the Temple of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in us. And so elsewhere, "Know ye not," saith the Apostle, "that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you?" which could not be unless the Holy Ghost

2 Pet. 1. 21;
Acts 28. 25;
21. 11.

1 Cor. 6. 19.

was God. Another express Scripture we have for it in Acts v. 3, 4, where St. Peter propounds this question to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" and then tells him in the next verse, "Thou hast not lied to men, but to God," and so expressly asserts the Holy Ghost to be God.

Moreover, that the Holy Ghost is truly God, co-equal to the Father and Son, it is plain in that the Scriptures assert Him to be, to have, and do whatsoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doeth, as God. For, is the Father and Son eternal? So is the Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Is God the Father and the Son every where? So is the Spirit, Ps. cxxxix. 7. Is God the Father, and the Son, a wise, understanding, powerful, and knowing God? So is the Spirit, Isa. xi. 2. Are we baptized in the Name of the Father and the Son? So are we baptized in the Name of the Holy Ghost. May we sin against the Father and the Son? So may we sin, too, against the Holy Ghost. Nay, the sin against this Person only is accounted by our Saviour to be a sin never to be pardoned, Matt. xii. 31, 32. We may sin against God the Father, and our sin may be pardoned; we may sin against God the Son, and our sin may be pardoned; but if we sin or speak against the Holy Ghost, "that shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come." But, if the Holy Ghost be not God, how can we sin against Him; or how comes our sin against Him only to be unpardonable, unless He be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable, because He is God, for then the sins against the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, seeing They both are God as well as He; yet though this sin is not therefore unpardonable, because He is God, yet it could not be unpardonable, unless He was God. For, supposing Him not to be God, but a creature, and yet the sin against Him to be unpardonable, then the sin against a creature would be unpardonable, when sins against God Himself are pardoned: which to say, would itself, I think, come near to the sin against the Holy Ghost. But seeing our Saviour describes this unpardonable sin, by blaspheming or speaking against the Holy Ghost, let them have a care that

they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the Holy Ghost to be really and truly God, and so blaspheme and speak the worst that they can against Him.

3. We have seen what ground we have to believe that there are Three Persons in the Godhead, and that every one of these Three Persons is God; we are now to consider the order of those Persons in the Trinity, described in the words before us:—First the Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost: every one of which is really and truly God: and yet they are but one real and true God. A mystery which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great care how we speak of it, it being both easy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon One numerically Divine nature, in more than One and the same Divine Person; or upon Three Divine Persons in no more than One and the same Divine nature! If we speak of it, how hard is it to find out fit words to express it! If I say the ‘Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,’ be Three, and every One distinctly God, it is true; but if I say, They be Three, and every One a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the Divine Persons are distinct in the Divine nature; but I cannot say, that the Divine nature is divided into the Divine Persons. I may say, God the Father is One God, and the Son is One God, and the Holy Ghost is One God; but I cannot say, that the Father is One God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a Third God. I may say, the Father begat another Who is God; yet I cannot say, that He begat another God. And from the Father and the Son proceedeth another, Who is God; yet I cannot say, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For all this while, though their Persons be distinct, yet still their nature is the same. So that though the Father be the first Person in the Godhead, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost the third; yet the Father is not the first, the Son the second, the Holy Ghost a third God: so hard a thing is it to word so great a mystery aright, or to fit so high a truth with expressions suitable and proper to it, without going one way or another from it. And therefore I shall not use many

words about it, lest some should slip from me unbecoming of it; but, in as few terms as I can, I will endeavour to shew upon what account the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third Person in the Trinity.

(1.) *First*, Therefore, the Father is placed first, and really is the first Person, not as if He was before the other Two, for They are all co-eternal; but because the other Two received Their essence from Him; for the Son was begotten of the Father, and the Holy Ghost proceedeth both from the Father and the Son; and therefore the Father is termed by the Primitive Christians, *‘Ρίζα καὶ Πηγή Θεότητος*, ‘the Root and the Fountain of Deity.’ As in waters there is the fountain or well-head, then there is a spring that boils up out of that fountain, and then there is the stream that flows both from the fountain and the spring, and yet all these are but one and the same water; so here God the Father is the Fountain of Deity; the Son, as the spring that boils up out of the fountain; and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both; and yet all Three are but One and the same God. The same may also be explained by another familiar instance: the sun, you know, begets beams, and from the sun and beams together proceed both light and heat; so God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace: but as the sun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together: so neither is the Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another; in which only respect the Father is the first Person in the Trinity.

(2.) *Secondly*, The Son is the second Person, Who is called the Son, yea, and the ‘Only-begotten Son of God,’ because He was begotten of the Father, not as others are by spiritual regeneration, but by eternal generation, as none but Himself is: for the opening whereof, we must know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not Himself sterile or barren; but He that hath given power to animals to generate and produce others in their own nature, is Himself much more able to produce one, not only like Himself, but of the self-same nature with Himself, as He did in begetting

His Son, by communicating His Own unbegotten essence and nature to Him. For the Person of the Son was most certainly begotten of the Father, or otherwise He would not be His Son; but His essence was unbegotten, otherwise He would not be God; and therefore the highest apprehensions that we can frame of this great mystery, the eternal generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the Person of the Father to have communicated His Divine essence to the Person of the Son; and so of Himself begetting His other self, the Son, by communicating His Own eternal and unbegotten essence to Him: I say, by communicating of His essence, not of His Person to Him, for then they would be both the same Person, as now They are of the same essence: the essence of the Father did not beget the Son by communicating His Person to Him, but the Person of the Father begat the Son by communicating His essence to Him; so that the Person of the Son is begotten, not communicated, but the essence of the Son is communicated, not begotten.

This notion of the Father's begetting the Son, by communicating His essence to Him, I ground upon the Son's Own words, Who certainly best knew how Himself was begotten: "For as the Father," saith He, "hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." To have life in Himself is an essential property of the Divine nature; and therefore wheresoever that is given or communicated, the nature itself must needs be given and communicated too.

Now here we see how God the Father communicated this His essential property, and so His essence, to the Son, and, by consequence, though He be a distinct Person from Him, yet He hath the same unbegotten essence with Him; and therefore, as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath the Son life in Himself; and so all other essential properties of the Divine Nature, only with this personal distinction, that the Father hath this life in Himself, not from the Son, but from Himself; whereas the Son hath it, not from Himself, but from the Father; or the Father is God of Himself, not of the Son; the Son is the same God, but from the Father,

not from Himself; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son, is rightly called by the Council of Nice, ‘God of God, Light of Light, yea, very God of very God.’

(3.) *Thirdly*, Having thus spoken of the two first Persons in the sacred Trinity, we now come to the last, the Holy Ghost. The last, I say, not in nature or time, but only in order; for, as to their nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to time, is one before another; none of them being measured by time, but all and every one of them eternity itself. But though not in nature or time, yet in order one must needs be before another: for the Father is of Himself, receiving His essence neither from the Son nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in order, before both; the Son received His essence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in order, is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit, receiving His essence both from the Father and the Son, must needs, in order, be after both.

I confess the Spirit is nowhere in Scripture said to proceed from the Son, and therefore the inserting this into the Nicene Creed was the occasion of that schism betwixt the Western and Eastern Churches, which hath now continued for many ages; in which I think both parties are blameworthy; the Western Churches, for inserting this clause following into the Nicene Creed, without the consent of a general council; and the Eastern for denying so plain a truth as this is: for though the Spirit be not said to proceed from the Son, yet He is called the “Spirit of the Son,” Gal. 4. 6; which questionless He would never have been, did He not Rom. 8. 9. proceed from the Son as well as from the Father. And, verily, the Father communicating His Own individual essence, and so whatsoever He is (His paternal relation excepted), to the Son, could not but communicate this to Him also, even to have the Spirit proceeding from Him as it doth from Himself. So that as whatsoever the Father hath originally in Himself, that hath the Son by communication from the Father: so hath the Son this, the Spirit’s proceeding from Him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in Himself: and the Spirit thus proceeding

both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that He is placed after both, not only in the words before us, but also in 1 John v. 7, and so elsewhere.

III. From what I have hitherto discoursed concerning this great mystery, the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, I shall gather some few inferences, and so conclude.

1. Is the Son God, yea, the same God with the Father? Hence I observe, what a strange mystery the work of man's redemption is, that God Himself should become man! And [that] He that was begotten of His Father, without a mother, from eternity, should be born of his mother, without a father, in time; that He Who was perfect God, like unto the Father in every thing, His personal properties only excepted, should also be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our personal infirmities only excepted; that He that made the world should be Himself made in it; that eternity should stoop to time, glory be wrapt in misery, and the Sun of Righteousness hid under a clod of earth; that innocence should be betrayed, justice condemned, and life itself should die, and all to redeem man from death to life. O wonder of wonders! how justly may we say with the Apostle, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness!"

1 Tim. 3. 16.

2. Is the Spirit also God? Hence I observe, that it is God alone that can make us holy; for seeing the Scripture all along ascribes our sanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is Himself really and truly God, it necessarily followeth, that the special concurrence and influence of Almighty God Himself is necessary to the making us really and truly holy.

3. Are all Three Persons in the Trinity one and the same God? Hence I infer, they are to have one and the same honour conferred upon Them, and one and the same worship performed unto Them. Or, as our Saviour Himself saith, "That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father;" and, "ye believe in God, believe also in Me." And as we pray to the Father, so should we pray to the Son too, as the Apostles did, Luke xvii. 5; and St. Stephen, Acts vii. 59; and St. Paul to all Three, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

John 5. 23.
ch. 14. 1.

4. Is Baptism to be administered in the Name of the

Father, and of the Son, of the Holy Ghost? Hence I observe how necessary it is to believe in these Three Persons, in order to our being real and true Christians; for we being made Christians in the Name of all Three, that man ceaseth to be a Christian that believes only in One; for faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is necessary to the very constitution of a Christian; and is the principal, if not the only characteristical note whereby to distinguish a Christian from another man; yea, from a Turk; for this is the chief thing that the Turks, both in their Alcoran and other writings, upbraid Christians for, even because they believe a Trinity of Persons in the Divine nature. For which cause they frequently say they are 'people that believe God hath companions;' so that take away this article of our Christian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but little difference betwixt a Christian and a Turk: but by this means Turks would not turn Christians, but Christians Turks, if this fundamental article of the Christian religion was once removed; for he that doth not believe this, is no Christian, upon that very account, because he doth not believe that by which a Christian is made; and whatsoever else errors a man may hold, yet if he believes in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, I cannot, I dare not but acknowledge him to be a Christian in general, because he holds fast to the foundation of the Christian religion, though perhaps he may build upon it hay and stubble, and so his superstructure be infirm and rotten.

I shall conclude with a word of advice to all such as call themselves by the Name of Christ: I suppose and believe they are all Christians, from their taking that name, and therefore I need not use any arguments to persuade them to turn Christians, for so they are already by profession: but seeing that they are Christians, let me desire them to consider how they came to be so; even by being baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And if they desire to be Christians still, I must advise them to continue stedfast in that faith whereby they were made so. Of all the errors and heresies which Satan hath sowed amongst us, let us have an especial care to avoid

such as strike at the very foundation of our religion ; I mean the Arians, Macedonians, Socinians, and all manner of Antitrinitarians, such as deny the most sacred Trinity.

But I hope we have better learned Christ than to hearken to such opinions as these are ; and therefore my next advice in brief is only this, that as we excel others in the truth of our profession, so we would excel them also in the holiness of our life and conversation : let us manifest ourselves to be Christians indeed, by believing the assertions, trusting in the promises, fearing the threatenings, and obeying the precepts, of Christ our Master, that both infidels and heretics may be convinced of their errors, by seeing us outstripping them in our piety towards God, equity to our neighbours, charity to the poor, unity amongst ourselves, and love to all ; for this would be a clear demonstration, that our faith is better than theirs is, when our lives are holier than theirs are ; and for our encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, that if we believe thus, as Christ hath taught us, and live as He hath commanded us, we shall also obtain what He hath promised, even eternal happiness in the world to come ; where we shall see, enjoy, and praise that God, into Whose Name we are baptized, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for evermore. There, with Angels and Archangels, with the Heavens and all the Powers therein ; with Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the blessed inhabitants of those everlasting mansions ; with the glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets ; the noble army of Martyrs ; all the company of Heaven, and the Holy Church throughout all the world, we shall eternally laud and magnify Thy sacred Name, ‘ O God the Father of Heaven ; O God the Son, Redeemer of the world ; O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son ; O Holy, Blessed, and Glorious Trinity, Three Persons and one God, evermore praising Thee, the Father of an Infinite Majesty ; together with Thine Honourable, True, and Only Son ; Thee the King of Glory, O Christ ; and Thee, O Holy Ghost, the Comforter ; still joining with the Heavenly choir, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory ; glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify

Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the Only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Thou Who takest away the sins of the world, and sittest at the right hand of God the Father. O Blessed, Glorious, and Eternal Spirit; for Thou only art Holy, Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art Most High in the glory of God the Father: for Thine, O Lord, is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'

'Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast given unto us Thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, Who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.'

And now having led the Christian through this first stage of his course, and instructed him in the principles of his religion, and in the great mystery of the Trinity, into which he was baptized, it may be fit to bring him into the world, and shew him how he ought to demean himself in regard to the things of it.

IV. THOUGHTS UPON WORLDLY RICHES.

SECTION I.

HE that seriously considers the constitution of the Christian religion, observing the excellency of its doctrines, the clearness of its precepts, the severity of its threatenings, together with the faithfulness of its promises, and the certainty of its principles to trust to; such a one may justly be astonished, and admire what should be the reason that they who profess this not only the most excellent, but only true religion in the world, should notwithstanding be generally as wicked, debauched, and profane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are so, is but too plain and obvious to

every one that observes their actions, and compares them with the practices of Jews, Turks, and infidels. For what sin have they among them, which we have not as rife among ourselves? Are they intemperate and luxurious? Are they envious and malicious against one another? Are they uncharitable and censorious? Are they given to extortion, rapine, and oppression? So are most of those who are called Christians. Do they blaspheme the Name of God, profane His Sabbaths, contemn His Word, despise His Ordinances, and trample upon the blood of His only Son? How many have we amongst ourselves that do these things as much as they?

But how comes this about, that they who are baptized into the Name of Christ, and profess the religion which He established in the world, should be no better than other people, and in some respects far worse? Is it because, though they profess the Gospel, yet they do not understand it; nor know what sins are forbidden, nor what duties are enjoined in it? That none can plead, especially amongst us who have the Gospel so clearly revealed, so fully interpreted, so constantly preached to us as we have. Insomuch that if there be any one person amongst us, that understands not what is necessary to be known, in order to our everlasting happiness, it is because we will not, wilfully shutting our eyes against the light.

But what, then, shall we impute this wonder to, that Christians are generally as bad as Heathens? Does Christ in His Gospel dispense with their impieties, and give them indulgences for their sins, and license to break the Moral Law? It is true, his pretended vicar at Rome doeth so; but far be it from us to father our sins upon Him Who came into the world on purpose to save us from them. Indeed, if we repent and turn from sin, He hath both purchased and promised pardon and forgiveness to us, but not till then: but hath expressly told us the contrary, assuring us, that

Luke 13. 3.

“except we repent, we must all perish.” I confess there have been such blasphemous heretics amongst us called Antinomians, who are altogether for faith without good works, making as if Christ, by erecting His Gospel, destroyed the Moral Law; but none can entertain such a

horrible opinion as that is, whose sinful practices have not so far depraved their principles, that they believe it is so only because they would have it to be so, directly contrary to our Saviour's Own words: "Think not that I am come Matt. 5. 17. to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil!" But I hope there is none of us but have better learned Christ, than to think that He came to patronise our sins, Who was "sent to bless us, by turning Acts 3. 26. away every one of us from our iniquities." But how come Christians, then, to be so bad and sinful as other men? Is it because they are as destitute as other men of all means whereby to become better? No, this cannot possibly be the reason; for nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at least may, if we will, have whatsoever can any way conduce to the making us either holy here, or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto revealed to us in the Word of God; we have that Word frequently expounded and applied to us; we have all free access, not only to the Ordinances which God hath appointed for our conversion, but even to the very Sacraments themselves, whereby our faith may be confirmed, and our souls nourished to eternal life. And more than all this too, we have many gracious and faithful promises, that if we do but what we can, God, for Christ's sake, will afford us such assistances of His grace and Spirit, whereby we shall be enabled to perform universal obedience to the Moral Law, such as God, for Christ's sake, will accept of, instead of that perfection which the Law requires. So that now, if we be not all as real and true saints, as good and pious Christians as ever lived, it is certainly our own faults: for we have all things necessary to the making of us such, and if we were not wanting to ourselves, it is impossible we should fail of having all our sins subdued under us, and all true grace and virtue implanted in us. Insomuch that since the Christian religion was first revealed to the world, there have been certainly millions of souls converted by it, who now are glorified saints in Heaven, which once were as sinful creatures upon earth as we now are. But it seems they found the Gospel an effectual means of conversion and salvation; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any defect

in the Gospel, or the Christian religion, that we are not all as good men as ever lived, and, by consequence, better than the professors of all other religions in the world.

But what, then, shall we say to this wonder of wonders, that Christians themselves, in our age, live such loose and dissolute lives as generally they do? What shall be the reason that all manner of sin and evil should be both practised and indulged amongst us, as much as in the darkest corners of the world upon which the Gospel never yet shined? Why, when we have searched into all the reasons that possibly can be imagined, next to the degeneracy and corruption of our nature, this must needs be acknowledged as one of the chief and principal, that men living upon earth, and conversing ordinarily with nothing but sensible and material objects, they are so much taken up with them, that those Divine and spiritual truths which are revealed in the Gospel make little or no impression at all upon them: though they hear what the Gospel saith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concerned about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their affections being all bent and inclined only to the things of this world. And therefore it is no wonder that they run with so full a career into sin and wickedness, notwithstanding their profession of the Gospel, seeing their natural propensity and inclination to the things of this world are so strong and prevalent within them, that they will not suffer them to think seriously upon, much less to concern themselves about, any thing else.

The Apostle, in his First Epistle to Timothy, chap. vi. endeavouring to persuade men from the over-eager desire of earthly enjoyments, presses this consideration upon us, that such an inordinate desire of the things of this world betrays

1 Tim. 6. 8,
9.
ver. 10.

men into many and great temptations. And then he gives this as the reason of it. "For the love of money is the root of all evil;" that is, in brief, the love of riches and temporal enjoyments is the great reason why men are guilty of such great and atrocious crimes as generally they are; there being no evil but what springs from this, as from its root and origin; which is so plain a truth, so constantly and universally experienced in all ages, that the heathens themselves,

the ancient poets and philosophers, could not but take notice of it. For Bion the philosopher was wont to say, that φιλαργυρία, 'the love of money,' was κακίας μητρόπολις, 'the metropolis of wickedness:' and Apollodorus, Ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν τὸ κεφάλαιον τῶν κακῶν εἴρηκας, ἐν φιλαργυρίᾳ γὰρ πάντ' ἐνι, 'When thou speakest of the love of money, thou mentionest the head of all evils, for they are all contained in that.' To the same purpose is that of the poet Phocylides, Ἡ δὲ φιλοχρημοσύνη μήτηρ κακότητος ἀπάσης, 'The love of riches is the mother of all wickedness.' What these saw by the light of nature, hath here Divine authority stamped upon it; God Himself asserting the same thing by His Apostle, Ρίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστίν ἡ φιλαργυρία, "The love of money is the root of all evils;" which that we may the better understand, we must consider,

I. What is here meant by money.

II. What by the love of riches.

III. How the love of money is the root of all evils.

I. As for the first, I need not insist long upon it, all men knowing well enough what money is. But we must remember, that by money is here understood not only silver and gold, but all earthly comforts, possessions, and enjoyments whatsoever, whether goods, lands, houses, wares, wealth, or riches of any sort or kind whatsoever.

II. By the love of money we are to understand that sin which the Scriptures call "covetousness;" and the true nature and notion of it consisteth especially in three things.

1. In having a real esteem and value for wealth or money, as if it was a thing that could make men happy, or better than otherwise they would be; as it is plain all covetous men have their desire of riches proceeding only from a groundless fancy, that their happiness consists in having much, which makes them set a greater value upon riches, preferring them before other things, even before God Himself. Hence the love of money is altogether inconsistent with the love of God: "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." It being impossible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the world too at the same time.

2. Hence the love of money supposeth also a delight and

[Stob. Florileg. tit. x. 38, vol. i. p. 293; Ed. Gaisf.]

[Tit. xvi. 11, vol. i. p. 339.]

[Fragm. xiv. 37; Gaisf. Poet. Min. Græc. vol. i. p. 448.]

[1 Tim. 6. 10.]

1 John 2. 15.

Luke 12. 16-
19.

complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the aforesaid esteem they have for it; for, being possessed with a fond opinion that the more they have, the better they are, they cannot but be pleased with the thoughts of their present enjoyments, as the rich man was in the Gospel, who, because his ground brought forth plentifully, resolved to enlarge his barns, and lay up stores for many years, and bid his soul take her ease. How many such fools have we amongst us, who please and pride themselves with the thoughts of their being rich!

3. From this esteem for, and complacency in, money or wealth, it follows that men are still desirous of having more, placing their happiness only in riches; because they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence how much soever they have, they still desire more, and therefore covetousness in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by *πλεονεξία*, which properly signifies ‘an inordinate desire of having more;’ which kind of desires can never be satisfied, because they are able to desire more than all the world, and to raise themselves as high and as far as the infinite Good itself.

III. Now such a love of money as this is, consisting in having a real esteem for it, in taking pleasure and delight in it, and in longing and thirsting after it; this is that which the Apostle here saith “is the root of all evil;” that is, it is the great and principal cause of all sorts of evil that men are guilty of, or obnoxious to; which that I may clearly demonstrate to you, we must first know in general that there are but two sorts of evil in the world, the evil of sin, and the evil of punishment or misery; and the love of money is the cause of them both.

1. To begin with the evil of sin, which is the only fountain from whence all other evils flow, and itself doth certainly spring from the love of money, as much or more than from any thing else in the whole world. Insomuch that the greatest part of those sins which any of us are guilty of, proceed from this master sin, even the love of money, as might easily be shewn from a particular enumeration of those sins which men generally are addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically in demon-

strating this, so as to convince men of the danger of this above most other sins, I desire it may be considered that there are two sorts of sins that we are guilty of, sins of omission and sins of commission, under which two heads all sins whatsoever are comprehended.

(1.) For sins of omission. It is plain that our love of money is the chief and principal cause that makes us neglect and omit our duties to God and man, as it is manifest we most of us do. In speaking unto which I must take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal salvation: and therefore howsoever some may resent it, I am bound in duty and conscience to remind men of their sins, and particularly of this great prevailing sin of covetousness, or inordinate love of money, which most men give but too much reason to fear they are guilty of; and therefore I may tell them of it, without any breach of charity. It is true, I cannot pretend to be a searcher of hearts,—that is only God's prerogative, and therefore I shall not take upon me to judge or censure any particular persons; but I shall speak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular application of it to himself. Neither shall I speak of things at random, but I shall instance only in such sins which I can assert upon my own knowledge that most men allow themselves, and that upon this account only, because they love money. For,

[i.] First, What is the reason that so few, indeed scarce any of us, are at prayers at church upon the week-day, to perform our devotion to Him that made us? Is it because we think it impertinent to pray unto Him? No, our presence there on Sundays contradicts that; and I have more charity than to think that any are so atheistical as to imagine it to be superfluous to pay our homage to the Supreme Governor of the world, and to implore His aid and blessing upon us. But what then should be the reason of it? In plain terms, it is nothing else but because men love money, and therefore are loath to spare so much time from their sports or callings, as to go to church to pray to God for what they want, and praise His name for what they have. Let us search into our hearts, and we shall acknowledge this

to be the only reason of it. But it is a very foolish one, for who can bless us but God?

[ii.] What is the reason that so many neglect the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper? Do we not all look upon it as our duty to receive it? I dare say we do; Christ Himself
 Luke 22. 19. having commanded it, and it being the only way whereby to manifest ourselves to be Christians; what then can be the reason of this neglect of it, but merely the love of money, which makes men loath to spend time in preparing and fitting themselves for it? But seeing men thus excommunicate themselves by not coming to the Communion, in plain terms they deserve to be excommunicated by the censures of the Church; and if God should in His providence deprive them of ever having an opportunity of receiving the Sacrament again, they must even thank themselves for it. Howsoever this shall be their present punishment, that they shall be deprived of it, until they think it worth their while to come unto it.

[iii.] What is the reason that the Sabbath is so profaned, that so many take their recreations upon the Lord's Day, but because they cannot spare time for it from getting money on other days? thinking the day long, because they can get little in it, as Amos, viii. 5. And why do so many profane the Sabbath while at church, by thinking upon the world, but because they love it?

[iv.] What is the reason that charity is so cold, but that the love of money is grown so hot among us? For do not we all know it is our duty to relieve the poor? Hath not God expressly commanded it? Hath He not threatened a curse to them that do it not, and promised a blessing to them that do it? What, then, can be the reason that so many neglect it, but because they love their money more than God?

To these might be added many other sins, which the love of money daily occasions. For what is the reason that many read the Scriptures so seldom and so cursorily as they do? What is the reason that they either have none, or commonly neglect their family duties; that every slight occasion will make them omit their private devotions; that

they can find no time to look into their own hearts, to consider their condition, and meditate upon God and Christ, and the world to come?

What is the reason that many know their shops better than their hearts, and are acquainted with the temper of their body more than with the constitution of their souls; that they are so careful and industrious in the prosecution of their worldly designs, so negligent and remiss in looking after Heaven? What is or can be the reason of these things, but that inordinate love and affection they have for money, or the things of this world, which makes them so eager in the pursuit of them, that they forget they have any thing else to mind, and so much taken up with worldly business, that God and Christ, and Heaven and soul, and all, must give way to it? Oh the folly and madness of sinful men! What a strange, corrupt, and degenerate thing is the heart of man become, that we should be so foolish and unwise, as to prefer our bodies before our souls, earth before Heaven, toys and trifles before the eternal God, and the worst of evils before the best of goods, even sin itself, with all the miseries that attend it, before holiness and that eternal happiness which is promised to it; and all for nothing else but the love of a little pelf and trash, which hath no other worth but what our own distracted fancies put upon it!

(2.) And if the love of money be the root of so many sins of omission, how many sins of commission must needs sprout from it! Indeed they are so many, that it would be an endless thing to reckon them all up, and therefore I shall not undertake it, but shall mention only such of them as every one, upon the first reading, shall acknowledge to be the cursed offspring of this one fruitful and big-bellied sin of covetousness, or the love of money; of which Cicero observes, that ‘Nullum est officium tam sanctum atque solemne, quod non avaritia comminuere atque violare soleat.’ So we may say on the other side too, that there is no sin so great and horrid but covetousness will sometimes put men upon it.

[Pro Quint.
cap. 6. 26.]

[i.] Is idolatry a sin? Yea certainly, one of the greatest that any man can be guilty of; and yet nothing can be more plain than that covetousness, wheresoever it comes, draws it along with it, insomuch that every covetous man is as-

Eph. 5. 5. serted by God Himself to be an idolater, and covetousness
Col. 3. 5. to be idolatry itself. And the reason is plain, for what is idolatry, but to give that worship to a creature which is due only unto God? But what higher acts of worship can we perform to God, than to love Him, and to trust on Him, which it is certain every covetous man gives to his money, and therefore covetousness is here called *φιλαργυρία*, ‘the love of money?’ And we cannot but be all sensible what trust and confidence men are wont to repose in their estates and incomes. But such will say, ‘We do not fall down before our money, nor pray unto it;’ but they trust on it, and that is infinitely more than bare praying to it: and though they do not bow down before it in their bodies, yet they make all the faculties of their souls to bow down and stoop unto it; they love and desire it; they rejoice and delight in having of it; they are grieved and troubled for nothing so much as the parting with it; nor fear any thing so much as the losing of it.

But they will say again, ‘We do not sacrifice to our bags, nor burn incense to our estates; we never did nor intend to offer so much as a lamb or calf unto it.’ It is true they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the poor to it, suffering them to perish with hunger, thirst, and cold, rather than relieve them with that necessary maintenance which God has put into their hands for them: they offer their own bodies to it, exposing them to heats and colds, to dangers and hazards both by sea and land, and all for money; yea, they offer their own souls to it likewise as a whole burnt-offering, giving them to lie scorching in Hell flames to eternity, and that upon no other account but to get money; and tell me which are the greatest fools and the most odious idolaters,—such as offer beasts to the sun and flames, or such as offer themselves both soul and body to dirt and clay? We cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worse, and by consequence the covetous man to be the greatest idolater in the world, and that too only because he is a covetous man.

[ii.] Moreover, is not extortion and oppression a sin? And yet we all know that it is the love of money that is the only cause of it. Is not strife and contention a sin? whence

comes it but from our lusting after money? Is not perjury James 4. 1. a sin? Is not corruption of justice a sin? Is not cheating and cozenage a sin? Is not pride and haughtiness a sin? Is not unrighteous dealing betwixt man and man a sin? Is not theft and robbery a sin? Is not treason and rebellion a sin? Are not all these sins, and great ones too? But whence spring these poisonous fruits into the lives of men, but from the bitter root of covetousness in their hearts? It is the love of money that makes these sins to rise amongst us; it is this that makes men forswear themselves, and cozen others; it is this that oftentimes makes fathers ruin their children, and children to long for the death of their fathers; it is this that makes neighbours go to law, and brethren themselves to be at variance; it is this that makes men strive to overreach each other, and to blind the eyes of those they deal with; it is this that hath caused some to murder others, and others to destroy themselves. What shall I say more? There is no impiety that can be committed against God, nor injury that can be offered unto men, but the love of money hath been the cause of it in others, and will be so in us, unless it be timely prevented, and therefore it may well be termed the 'root' of all the evil of sin.

2. And it being the root from whence all the evil of sin springs, it must needs be the root of all the evil of punishment and misery too, misery and punishment being the necessary consequents of sin. Indeed this sin carries its misery along with it, as Seneca himself saw by the mere light of nature, saying, "*Nulla avaritia sine pœnâ est, quamvis satis sit ipsa pœnarum:*" 'No avarice is without punishment, though it be itself punishment enough.' For, what a torment is it for a man to be always thirsty, and never able to quench his thirst! Yet this is the misery of every covetous man, whose thirst after money can never be satisfied, and who is so desirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with comfort what he hath, loving money so well that he grudgeth himself the use of it. Hence the aforesaid author observed, that "*In nullum avarus bonus est, in seipsum pessimus:*" 'The covetous man is good to none, but worst of all to himself.' And as this is the natural consequent of this sin in itself, so it is the ordinary punishment that God inflicts

[Epist.
115.]

[Epist.
108.]

Eccles. 6.
1, 2.

upon men for it, not suffering them to take any pleasure in the use of what they love. And besides that, what cares and fears, what labours and travels, what dangers and hazards, doth the love of money put men upon! How do they rack their brains and break their rest to get it; and when it is gotten, what fears are they always in lest they should lose it again! What grief and trouble do the poor wretches undergo for every petty loss that befalls them! so that every covetous man is not only miserable, but therefore miserable because covetous.

Matt. 19.
23-25;
Luke 16.
19, 22.
Prov. 30. 8.

But if their misery be so great in this life, how great will it be in that to come! Concerning which there are two things to be observed: First, that the very having of riches makes it very difficult to get to Heaven. Hence Agur was afraid of them. Neither do we ever read of any of the Patriarchs, Prophets, or the Saints recorded in Scripture, to have been guilty of this sin, unless Baruch, who was

Jer. 45. 5.

reproved for it.

1 Tim. 6. 9.
Eph. 5. 5, 6.

And as the having of money makes it difficult to get to Heaven, so the loving of it makes it impossible to keep out of Hell. For, so long as man is covetous, he is liable to every temptation, ready to catch at every bait that the Devil throws before him; so that he is led by him as he pleaseth, till at length he be utterly destroyed. And therefore the same Apostle elsewhere tells us, that the covetous have no inheritance in the Kingdom of God, but the wrath of God will most certainly fall upon them. But the wrath of God is the greatest evil of punishment that it is possible for men to bear: indeed it is that which once being incensed makes hell-fire. And yet we see that the heat of our love to money will enkindle the flames of God's wrath against us; yea, and such flames too as will never be quenched. And so for the little seeming transient pleasure they take in getting or keeping money now, they must live in misery and contempt, in shame and torment, for evermore.

Mark 9. 44.

ver. 9, 10.

Thus now we see that the love of money will not only put us upon the evil of sin, but it will also bring the evil of punishment upon us, both which the Apostle here imputes to this sin. And therefore he both well may and must be understood of both these sorts of evil, when he saith, that

“the love of money is the root of all evil;” which, the premises considered, I hope none can deny; and need I then heap up more arguments to dissuade men from this sin, and to prevail with them to leave doting upon the world and loving money? Is not this one argument of itself sufficient? For is it possible for us to indulge ourselves in this sin, now we know it is the root of all evil; and that if we still love money, there is no sin so great but we may fall into it, and no misery so heavy but it may fall upon us? Surely, if this consideration will not prevail upon us to despise and condemn, rather than to love and desire this world, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that so long as men continue in this sin, all writing and preaching will be in vain to them; and so will their hearing be, their going to church, their reading the Scriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them; all this will signify nothing, this root of all evil is still within us, and will bring forth its bitter fruit do what we can. And therefore, as ever we desire to profit by what we hear, as ever we desire to avoid any one sin whatsoever, to know what happiest means to escape either present torment or eternal misery, as ever we desire to be real saints, and to manifest ourselves to be so, to go to Heaven, and live with God and Christ for ever, let not our affections be entangled any longer in the briers and thorns of this lower world, let us beware of loving money. “If riches increase, let us not set our hearts upon them,” but Ps. 62. 10. scorn and despise them hereafter, as much as ever heretofore we have desired or loved them.

But I cannot, I dare not but in charity believe and hope, that by this time my readers are something weaned from their doting upon this present world, and desire to know how they may for the future get off their affections from it, so as to have this root of all evil extirpated, and quite plucked up from within them. I hope this is now the desire of all, or at least of most of them; and therefore I shall now endeavour to shew them how they may infallibly accomplish and effect it. In order thereto,

1. Let such persons often consider with themselves how unsuitable the things of this world are for their affections

and love, which were designed only for the chiefest good. When God implanted the affection of love within us, He did not intend it should be the root of all evil, but of all good unto us; and therefore He did not give it to us, to place it fondly upon such low and mean objects as this world presents unto us, but that we should love Himself with all our hearts and souls. And surely He infinitely deserves our love more than such trash can do.

Deut. 6. 5.

2. Let them remember that so long as they love money, they may pretend what they please, they do not love God, 1 John, ii. 15, nor Christ, Matt. x. 37, Luke, xiv. 26, and by consequence they have no true religion at all in them, James, i. 27.

Matt. 5. 3, 4.

3. Let them often read and study our Saviour's Sermon upon the Mount, where He pronounces the meek and low, not the rich and mighty, to be blessed, and weigh those strong and undeniable arguments which He brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the world, nor trouble our heads about the impertinent concerns of this transient life.

ch. 6. 24-28.

ver. 33.

4. Let them labour to confirm and strengthen their trust and confidence on the promises of God, Who hath assured us, that if we love and fear Him, He will take care of us, and provide all things necessary for us. This is the great argument which the Apostle uses, Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

1 Thess. 2.
12.

5. Let them remember that they are called to higher things than this world is able to afford them; the Christian is a high and Heavenly calling; we are called by it, and invited to a kingdom and eternal glory, and therefore ought not to spend our time about such low and paltry trash as riches and wealth.

[St. Greg.
Mag. Hom.
in Evang.
lib. ii. 37,
tom. i. p.
1626, E. and
Epist. xii. 7,
tom. ii. p.
1185. Ed.
Ben.]

6. Let them get above the world, let their conversation be in Heaven, and then they will soon look down upon all things here below, as beneath their concern, 'Vilescunt temporalia, cum desiderantur æterna,' said St. Gregory. He that seriously thinks upon and desires Heaven, cannot but vilify and despise earth. Oh what fools and madmen do the blessed Angels and the glorified Saints in Heaven think us poor mortals upon earth to be, when they see us busying

ourselves about getting a little refined dirt, and in the meanwhile neglecting those transcendent glories which themselves enjoy, although they be offered to us!

7. Let them never suffer the vanity of all things here below to go out of their minds, but remember still, that, get what they can, it is but vanity and vexation of spirit, as Solomon himself asserted upon his own experience, though he be sure had more than any of us are ever likely to enjoy. And let them not only often repeat the words, but endeavour to get themselves convinced thoroughly of the truth of them, which their own experiences, duly weighed and rightly applied, will soon do.

8. Let it be their daily prayer to Almighty God, that He would take off their affections from the world, and incline them to Himself, as David did, saying, "Incline my heart to Thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." Ps. 119. 36.

To all these means, let them add the constant and serious consideration of what they have here read, that the love of money is the root of all evil; assuring themselves, that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true by their own sad and woeful experience, when they shall be stripped of their present enjoyments, and so turn bankrupts in another world, where they will be cast into prison without ever having a farthing to relieve themselves, or so much as a drop of water to cool their inflamed tongues.

By these and suchlike means, none of us but may suppress the love of money in us, which is the root of all evil, and so avoid or prevent all the evil which otherwise will proceed from it. Whether any of my readers will be persuaded to use these means or no, I know not; however, let me tell them, that if they are loath to strive to get their affections deadened to the world, it is an infallible sign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and seed of all manner of evil remains in them; nor can it be expected they will be persuaded to any one duty whatsoever, until they are first prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their lusts and affections to the things of this world. For so long as those are predominant within us, no grace whatsoever can be exerted, nor duty performed, nor any sin avoided by us.

But oh how happy would it be, if it should please the Most High God to send what I have here said so home upon any, as to induce them to set themselves seriously for the future to the eradicating or rooting up this love of money out of their hearts! What a holy, what a blessed, what a peculiar people should we then be, and how zealous of good works! Then we should take all opportunities of performing our devotions to Almighty God: then we should have as many at the Sacrament as at a sermon; then our Churches would be filled all the week as well as on Sundays, and the Eternal God constantly worshipped with reverence and godly fear: then we should take delight in clothing the naked, feeding the hungry, and relieving the oppressed: then there would be no such thing as cheating and cozenage, as lying and perjury, as strife and contention, amongst us. But we should all walk hand and hand together in the ways of piety, justice, and charity upon earth, until at length we shall come to Heaven, where we shall be so far from loving or desiring money, that we shall account it as it is, even dross and dirt; where our affection shall be wholly taken up with the contemplation of the chiefest Good, and we shall solace ourselves in the enjoyment of His perfections for evermore.

SECTION II.

Timothy, after his conversion to the Christian faith, being found to be a man of great parts, learning, and piety, and so every way qualified for the work of the ministry, St. Paul, who had planted a Church at Ephesus, the metropolis or chief city of all Asia, left him to dress and propagate it, after his departure from it; giving him power to ordain elders or priests, and to visit and to exercise jurisdiction over them, to see they did not teach false doctrines, that they be unblameable in their lives and conversations, and to exercise authority over them, in case they be otherwise. And, therefore, it cannot in reason but be acknowledged that Timothy was the bishop, superintendent, or visitor of all the Asian

Churches, as he was always asserted to have been by the Fathers of the Primitive Church; as Eusebius reports, saying, [Hist. Eccles. 3.4.]
 Τιμόθεος τῆς ἐν' Εφέσῳ παροικίας ἱστορεῖται πρῶτος τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν εἰληχέναι,
 ‘that Timothy is reported to have been the first bishop of the province of Ephesus.’ Be sure he had the oversight of all the Churches that were planted there; and not only in Ephesus itself, but likewise in all Asia; which was subject then to his ecclesiastical power and jurisdiction.

And hence it is that the Apostle St. Paul, in his first Epistle to him, gives him directions how to manage so great a work, and to discharge so great a trust as was committed to him, both as bishop and priest; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewise how to preach himself the Gospel of Christ. And having spent the whole Epistle in directions of this sort, in the close of it, as it were, at the foot of the Epistle, he subjoins one general caution to be constantly observed by him: “Charge them that are rich in 1 Tim. 6. 17.
 this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;” which words, though first directed to Timothy, were in him intended for all succeeding ministers and preachers of the Gospel; such I mean who are solemnly ordained and set apart for this work. We are all obliged to observe the command which is here laid upon us, as without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: for so long as their minds are set altogether upon riches, and the things of this world, we may preach our hearts out before we can ever persuade them to mind Heaven and eternal happiness in good earnest. This St. Paul knew well enough, and therefore hath left this not only as his advice and counsel, but as a strict command and duty incumbent upon the preachers of the Gospel in all ages, that they “charge them that are rich,” &c.; where it may be observed,

I. In the first place, how we are expressly enjoined to “charge them that are rich,” &c. a word much to be observed. The Apostle doth not say, desire, beseech, counsel, or admonish the rich, but παράγγελλε τοῖς πλουσίοις, “charge and command them that are rich.” The word properly signifies such a charge as the judges at an assize or sessions

make in the king's name, enjoining his subjects to observe the established laws and statutes of the kingdom. And so the word is always used in Scripture for the strictest way of commanding any thing to be observed or done, as οὐ παραγγελία παρηγγείλαμεν ὑμῖν; "Did we not strictly command you?" Acts 5. 28. παρηγγείλεν αὐτῷ, "He charged him to tell no man." Thus, Luke 5. 14. therefore, it is that we are here enjoined to "charge the rich," in the name of the Kings of kings, "not to be high-minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches," &c.

And this is the proper notion, and the only true way of preaching the Word of God, which therefore in Scripture is ordinarily expressed by the word κηρύσσειν, which properly signifies to publish or proclaim, as heralds do the will and pleasure of the prince, and in his name to command the people to observe it. Thus we are enjoined to preach the Word of God, by publishing His will and pleasure to men; charging them in His Name to obey and practise it. For we come not to them in our own names, but in His that created and redeemed them; and therefore, although we neither have nor pretend to any power or authority over them from ourselves, yet, by virtue of the commission which we have received from the Universal and Supreme Monarch of the world, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound, to charge and enjoin all in His Name to observe what He hath commanded them. Insomuch, that although we pretend not to Divine inspiration, or immediate revelations from God, such as the Prophets had; yet we, preaching the same Word which they did, may, and often ought to use the same authority which they used, saying, as they did, "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts;" for whatsoever is written in the Scriptures, is as certainly God's Word now, as it was when first inspired or revealed to them. And therefore it cannot be denied but that we have as much power to charge upon all the observation of what is there written, as they ever had, we being sent to preach and proclaim the will of God unto all, by the same person as they were. Hence it is that the Apostle in the Name of God commands Titus, and in Him all succeeding ministers of the Gospel, to speak or preach the Word of God, to exhort and rebuke with all authority. From Tit. 2. 15. whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our duty to

preach with authority, as those who have received power from God to make known His will and pleasure to all men; or as the Apostle here expressly words it, to “charge them not to be high-minded,” and the like.

But this I fear may be a very ungrateful subject to many, and therefore I should not have insisted so long upon it, but that there is a kind of necessity for it. For I verily believe, that the non-observance of this hath been, and still is, the principal reason why people receive so little benefit by hearing of sermons as they usually do: for they look upon sermons only as popular discourses, rehearsed by one of their fellow-creatures, which they may censure, approve, or reject, as themselves see good. And we ourselves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at least remiss, in this particular; in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long harangue or oration concerning some point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical divinity, and use only some moral persuasions to press upon our auditors the observance of what we say, without interposing or exercising the authority which is committed to us, so as to charge them, in the Name of the Most High God, to observe and practise what we declare and prove unto them to be His will, and by consequence their duty. But for my own part, did I think that preaching consisted only in explaining some point in divinity, and using only moral arguments to persuade men to perform their duty to God and man, I should not think it worth my while to do it, because I could not expect to do any good at all by it. For all the moral arguments in the world can never be so strong to draw us from sin, as our own natural corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon men either by our logic or rhetoric; but our arguments must be fetched from on high, even from the Eternal God Himself, or else they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We must charge and command them in God’s Name, or else we had as good say nothing.

It is true, did we, who preach God’s word, propose nothing else to ourselves, but to tickle men’s ears and please their fancies, and so to ingratiate ourselves into their love and favour, it would be easy to entertain them with dis-

courses of another nature, stuffed with such fine words, quaint phrases, and high notions, as would be very pleasing and acceptable unto them. But I must take leave to say, that we dare not do it; for we know that as our auditors must give an account of their hearing, so it is not long before we also must give an account of our preaching too; Heb. 13. 17. for so God Himself hath told us beforehand by His Apostle. But how shall we be able to look the Eternal God in the face, yea, or to look our auditors in the face at that time, if instead of charging their duty upon them, in order to their eternal salvation, we should put them off with general discourses, which signify nothing, only to please and gratify them whilst we remain with them? No, we dare not do it, and therefore I wish men would not expect it from us; for we must not hazard our own eternal salvation to gain their temporal favour or applause. And therefore, seeing God hath been pleased to intrust us so far with men's souls, as to direct them in the way to eternal life—howsoever they resent it, we are bound in duty, both to God, to them, and ourselves, to deal plainly with them, and to use the authority which He hath here committed to us, where He hath expressly commanded us in His Name, to “charge them that are rich in this world,” &c.

Where I desire the reader to observe, in the next place, that we of the clergy are not only empowered to charge the poorer or meaner sort of people, who, by reason of their extreme poverty and want, may seem inferior to us, but even rich men too; “charge them,” saith the Apostle, “that are rich in this world.” And the reason is, because we come unto them in His Name, Who gives them all the riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when He Himself pleaseth; so that He can make the poor rich, and the rich poor, when He pleaseth; and therefore the poor and rich are all alike to Him; His power and authority is the same over both; and therefore we, coming in His Name, are ordered to make no distinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we are particularly commanded to “charge them that are rich.” Which is the next thing to be considered in these words.

II. Even whom the Apostle means by them that “are

rich in this world?" Which is a question that needs a serious resolution. For many men, not thinking themselves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence that they are not to be reckoned amongst those whom the Apostle here calls "rich in this world." But whatsoever they may think of themselves, I believe there are but few, except the very poor, who in a Scripture sense are not rich men; for whatsoever any have over and above their necessary maintenance, that the Scriptures call riches, as is plain from Agur's wish, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me." Prov. 30. 8. From whence it is easy to observe, that as nothing but the want of convenient food is poverty; so whatsoever a man hath over and above his own convenient or necessary food, is properly his riches: and so he that hath it, is, in a Scripture sense, a rich man, who is therefore called here in my text *πλούσιος*, *quasi πολυούσιος*, 'one that hath much substance,' or more than he hath necessary occasion for. And therefore, although some may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may be justly reckoned in the number of rich men here spoken of; at least all such as, by the blessing of God, have not only what is necessary for their present maintenance, but likewise something to spare; and so may all come under the notion of those whom we are here commanded to charge not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, &c.

Having thus considered the act which we are here commanded to exert, and the object, the rich of this world, we are now,

III. To consider the subject-matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them; but that is here expressly set down in several particulars, all which I shall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

1. That they "be not high-minded;" a necessary caution for rich men. For riches are very apt to puff men up with vain and foolish conceits of themselves, so as to think themselves to be so much the better, by how much they are richer than other people; but this is a grand mistake, which we are here enjoined to use the utmost of our power and skill to rectify, by "charging them that are rich not to be high-minded;" that is, not to think highly and proudly of them-

selves, because they are richer or wealthier than other men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly-minded in the enjoyment of all temporal blessings, as if they enjoyed nothing ; as considering,

(1.) How much soever they have, they are no way really the better for it.

[i.] Not in their souls ; they are never the wiser nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God, by their being rich. Eccles. 9. 11 ; Job 34. 19.

[ii.] Nor in their bodies ; they are never the stronger, nor healthier, nor freer from pain and trouble, nor yet longer-lived than others.

[iii.] Nor in their minds ; their consciences are never the quieter, their hearts never the freer from cares and fears, Eccles. 5. 12. neither can they sleep better than other people.

[iv.] Nor yet in their estate and condition.

First, Not in this life. For riches can never satisfy them, nor by consequence make them happy ; but they may still be as miserable in the enjoyment, as in the want of all things. ver. 11.

Secondly, Nor yet in the life to come ; they are never the nearer Heaven, by being higher upon earth ; their gold and silver can never purchase an inheritance for them in the land of Canaan. James 2. 5.

(2.) They are so far from being better, that they are rather much worse for their having abundance here below.

[i.] They have more temptations to sin, to luxury, to covetousness, to the love of this world, to the neglect of their duty to God, to pride and self-conceitedness, to security and presumption. Luke 12. 19.

[ii.] It is harder for them to get to Heaven than it is for others ; and by consequence, the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miserable for ever. Whence our Saviour Himself denounceth a woe upon them that are rich, and James bids them “ weep and howl for their miseries ; ” and therefore advises us to rejoice rather at poverty than riches. Now these things being considered as spoken by God Himself, none can deny but that the rich are most certainly in a worse condition than the poor ; and by consequence, that men have no cause to be proud or high-minded, nor to glory in their riches. And therefore whatsoever out- Matt. 19. 23. Luke 6. 24. James 5. 1. ch. 1. 9, 10. Jer. 9. 23.

ward blessings God hath bestowed upon us, "Let us not be high-minded, but fear." Rom. 11. 20.

2. Nor "trust in uncertain riches," which I confess is a very hard lesson for a rich man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have riches, and not to trust in them, as our Saviour Himself intimates; in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely severed. But certainly it is altogether as foolish a thing to trust in riches, as it is to be proud of them. For, Mark 10. 23, 24.

(1.) They of themselves can stand us in no stead; they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good; they cannot of themselves either feed us, or clothe us, or refresh us, or be any ways advantageous to us, without God's blessing. How much less can they be able to deliver us from the wrath to come? No; we may take it for a certain truth, our riches may much further our eternal misery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future happiness. Prov. 11. 4.

(2.) If we trust in them, be sure they will fail us, and bring us to eternal misery and desolation; for to trust in any thing but God, is certainly one of the highest sins we can be guilty of; it is in plain terms idolatry; and therefore "He that trusteth in riches is sure to fall." For this is to deny God. ver. 28.

(3.) They are but uncertain riches, "they make themselves wings, and fly away." They are in continual motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one stay. So that you are never sure of keeping them one day. And what reason, then, can we have to trust on them? especially considering, that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty itself, as the word here signifies, "trust not in the uncertainty of riches." Job 31. 24, 25, 28. Prov. 23. 5.

But in the living God; He, He is to be the only object of our trust, whether we have or have not any thing else to trust on; or, to speak more properly, there is nothing that we can, upon good grounds, make our trust and confidence, but only Him Who governs and disposeth of all things according to His Own pleasure. So that it is He, and He alone, that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our wit or policy, it is not our strength or industry, it is not our trading and trafficking in the world, it is none but God that giveth

Dent. 8. 18; us what we have. And as it is He that maketh men rich,
 Prov. 10. 22. so He can make them poor again, when He Himself
 pleaseth; and they have cause to fear He will do so too,
 unless they observe what is here charged upon them.

There are four duties still behind, which we are here commanded to charge all those who are rich to observe.

1. That they "do good." In treating of which I might shew the several qualifications required to the making up of an action good: as that the matter of it must be good, as commanded, or at least allowed by God; that the manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obediently, understandingly, willingly, cheerfully, humbly, and sincerely; and that the end be good too, so as that it be directed ultimately to the glory of God. But not to insist upon that now, I shall only consider what kind of good works the rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich men. And they are two, works of piety and works of charity.

(1.) They are here commanded to do works of piety; where by works of piety, I mean not their loving, and fearing, and honouring of God, nor yet their praying to Him, their hearing His Word, or praising His Name, for such works of piety as these are, the poorest as well as the richest persons amongst us are bound to do; whereas the Apostle here speaks only of such works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account because they are so. And, therefore, by works of piety here, I understand such works as tend to the honour of His Name, to the performance of worship and homage to Him, to the encouragement of His ministers, the propagating of His Gospel, and the conversion of sinners to Him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmost of their power, out of the estates which for these purposes He hath intrusted with them. For thus they are expressly commanded to honour the Lord with all their substance or riches, and with the first-fruits of all their increase. And the reason is, because God is the universal Proprietor, the head Landlord of all the world, and we have nothing but what we hold under Him; neither are we any more than tenants at will to Him, who may fine us at His Own pleasure, or throw us out of possession whensoever He

sees good. Now lest we should forget this, even upon what tenure it is that we hold our estates, God hath enjoined us to pay Him, as it were, a quit-rent or tribute out of what we possess, as an acknowledgment that it is by His favour and blessing alone that we do possess it. So that whatsoever we do, or are able to offer Him, is but a due debt which we owe Him; which if we neglect to pay Him, we lose our tenure, and forfeit what we have to the Lord of the manor, the supreme Possessor of the world. Hence it is, that in all ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due sense of God upon their hearts, were always very careful to pay this their homage unto God; insomuch that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious use, wherein to testify their acknowledgment of God's dominion over them, and His right and property in what they had. A noble instance whereof we have in the children of Israel; for when the tabernacle was to be built for the service and worship of God, they were so far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they presently brought more than could be used in the building of it. So it was too in Ex. 36. 5-7. the building of the temple, which David and the chiefs or nobles of Israel made great preparations for. And that they 1 Chron. 29. 6-8. did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and Giver of all, is plain from the following words. The same ver. 11-13. was also observed in the building of the second temple, as the raising the first out of its rubbish, wherein it had lain for many years. And as for Christians, I need not tell you how forward those who have been truly pious, have always been in doing such works of piety, seeing most of the churches in Christendom, or be sure in this nation, have been erected by particular persons. And it is very observable, that the more eminent any place or age hath been for piety and devotion, the more pious works have always been done in it, for the service and worship of Almighty God; which plainly shews, that where such works are wanting, whatsoever pretences they may make, there is no such thing as true piety and the fear of God. And therefore, as ever we desire to manifest ourselves to be what we profess, true Christians indeed, men fearing God, and hating covetousness, we must take all opportunities to express our thankfulness unto God for

what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to His service and honour.

(2.) Besides these works of piety towards God, the rich are enjoined also works of charity towards the poor; which though they have an immediate reference to the poor, yet God looks upon them as given to Himself. Hence it is that Prov.14.31; 19. 17; Matt.25.40. God accepts of such works as these also for part of the tribute which we owe Him; whereby we acknowledge the receipt of what we have from Him, and express our thankfulness unto Him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a blessing upon what we have, nor that it should be really good to us: for, as the Apostle tells us, 1Tim. 4. 4. “every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving,” not else. But no thanksgiving is acceptable but that which is expressed by works as well as words. And therefore it is necessary for us to pay this duty and service to God, out of what we have, in order to the cleansing and sanctifying the residue of our estates unto us, without which we have not the lawful use of what we possess, but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour Himself intimates; a thing much to be considered. For I verily believe Luke 11.41. that the great reason why so many estates are blasted so soon, and brought to nothing amongst us, is because men do not render unto God His duty and tribute out of what they have; and therefore it is no wonder that God in His Providence turns them out of their possession, and gives their estates to other persons who shall be better tenants to Him, and be careful to pay Him the duties which He requires of them. And therefore, in order to men’s securing their estates to themselves and posterity, it is absolutely necessary that they observe the duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all that are rich in this world, even to do good with what they have; and not only so, but,

2. “To be rich, too, in good works;” that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their riches, so as to proportion their good works to the riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the Apostle’s directions, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Thus in the place before quoted, Luke xi. 41, where our Saviour bids the Pharisees to “give alms of such things as they have,” his words are,

τὰ ἐνόντα δότε τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην, 'give alms as much as ye are able,' for so the words properly signify. And verily whatsoever we do, unless it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all; for we must not think to compound with Him. When He hath given us all we have, He expects that we render all that He requires of us, that is, as much as we are able to pay unto Him. As if a man owes you money, you will not accept of part instead of the whole; so neither will God from us; we all owe Him as much as we are able to devote to His service and honour, and we must not think to put Him off with part of it; for He reckons that He receives nothing from us, unless it be proportionable to what He hath bestowed upon us. But how little soever it is that we give or offer to Him, if it be but answerable to our estates, it will be accepted by Him. This our Saviour Himself hath assured us of, Mark xii. 43, 44. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the poorest person whatsoever but may be as rich in good works as the richest, because God doth not measure the goodness of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our estates; so that he who gives a penny may do as good a work as he who gives a pound; yea, and a better too, because his may be as much as he is able, whereas the other's is not: I wish all men would seriously weigh and consider this, lest otherwise they go out of the world without ever having done one good work in it; for we may assure ourselves, he that is not thus rich in good works, doeth no good at all with his riches.

But it is further to be considered here, that this expression, "rich in good works," implies that good works are indeed our principal riches; and that men must not compute their riches so much from what they have, as from what they give and devote to God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands: but what we give is ours in God's hands, and He acknowledgeth Himself our debtor for it, in that He tells us that we lend it to Him, and promiseth to pay it to us again. And therefore they who cast up Prov. 19.17. their accounts to know how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their houses and lands that are made over to them, nor yet upon what is

owing to them by men ; but should reckon only upon what they have given to pious or charitable uses, upon what treasures they have laid up in Heaven. For whatsoever they may think at present, I dare assure them, that will be found to be their only riches another day. And, therefore, if any one desires to be rich indeed, let him take my advice, do what good he can with the riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough ; for this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he must likewise observe what follows : to be

Gal. 6. 10. 3. "Ready to distribute;" that is, ready upon all occasions to pay his tribute unto God, whensoever He in His providence calls for it; taking all opportunities of doing good, and glad when he can find them. Thus, therefore, whensoever any opportunities present themselves of expressing our thankfulness unto God, by works either of piety or charity, whatsoever other businesses may be neglected, we must be sure to lay hold on that. For I dare say, that there is none but will grant me, that there is all the reason in the world, that God should be served in the first place, and that He should have the first-fruits of all our increase. Prov. 3. 9; And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of Exod. 23. piety towards God, and of charity to the poor, or, as the 19; Deut. Scripture calls them in general, good works, are always to 26. 2. be done in the first place : and whatsoever other works may be omitted, be sure they must not. But we ought still to be as ready to pay our duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from Him, as ready to give as to receive ; and, by consequence, as men let no opportunities slip wherein they can increase their estates, they are much less to let any opportunities pass wherein they can any way improve their estates for God's glory and others' good ; that they ought to be ready upon all occasions to distribute what they can upon charitable and pious uses.

4. "Willing to communicate." As we must do it with a ready hand, so we must do it with a willing heart too. Thus we are enjoined to serve God willingly and cheerfully. 1 Chron. 28. 9; 2 Cor. 9. 6, 7. Indeed God accepts of none but freewill-offerings. If we be not as willing to do good works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be confident God will never accept

of them. And therefore in plain terms, if any would be rich in good works, as becometh Christians, and as it is our interest to be, they must not stay till they be compelled, persuaded, or entreated by others to do them; but they must set upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due sense of their constant dependence upon Him, and manifold obligations to Him; yea, so as to take pleasure in nothing in the world so much as in paying their respects and service to Almighty God.

¹ Chron. 29.
14, 15, 17.

Now, to encourage the rich to employ their estates thus in doing good, the Apostle adds, in the last place, that this is the way to “lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” A strange expression! yea, such an one, that had not St. Paul himself spoke it, some would have been apt to have excepted against it for an error or mistake. What, good works the foundation of eternal life? No, that is not the meaning of it; but that good works are the foundation of that blessed sentence which they shall receive who are made partakers of eternal life, as is plain from our Saviour’s Own words, Matt. xxv. 34-36.

And verily, although there be no such intrinsic value in good works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them; yet, nothing can be more certain than that God, of His infinite merey in Jesus Christ, will so accept of them as to reward us for them in the world to come. For this our Saviour Himself doth clearly intimate to us in the place before quoted; as also Matt. vi. 20; Luke xii. 33; xvi. 9, that is, distribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful riches you have in this world in such a way as is most pleasing and acceptable unto God, that so He may be your friend, and receive you into everlasting habitations, when these transient and unstable riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to observe, that to do good with what we have, is the only way whereby to improve our estates for our own good, so as to be the better for them both in this and also in the world to come. The Rabbins have a good saying, that מלח ממון צדקה, ‘good works are the salt of riches,’ that which preserves them from corruption, and makes them savoury and acceptable unto God, as also

useful and profitable to the owners; unless we do good with our estates, we forfeit our title to them by the non-payment of the rent-charge which God hath reserved to Himself upon them; and therefore we may justly expect every moment to be cast out of possession; or howsoever, though He may forbear us awhile, yea, so long as we are in this world, what good, what benefit, what comfort, shall we have of our estates in the world to come? Certainly no more than the rich man in the Gospel had when he lay scorching in hell-fire, and had not so much as a drop of water to cool his inflamed tongue. Whereas, on the other side, if we do good with our estates, if we devote them to the service of God, and to the relief of the poor, by this means we shall not only secure the possession of them to ourselves here, but shall also receive comfort and benefit from them in the world to come; so that our estates will not die with us, but we shall receive benefit by them, and have cause to bless God for them unto all eternity; the Apostle himself assuring us, that by this means we shall lay up for ourselves a good foundation for the time to come, so as to lay hold on eternal life.

This one argument being duly weighed, I hope I need not use any more to persuade men to do good with what they have, and to make the best use of it they can. For I know I write to Christians, at least to such as profess themselves to be so; and therefore to such as believe there is another world besides this we live in, and, by consequence, that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have shewn, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right improvement of what God hath intrusted with us in this world. What, then, do the generality of men mean to be so slack and remiss in laying hold on all opportunities of doing good? What, do they think it possible to lose any thing they do for God? or do they think it possible to employ their estates better than for His service and honour Who gave them to us? I cannot believe they think so, and therefore must needs advise the rich again and again, not to lay up their talent in a napkin, but to use their estates to the best advantage for God and their own souls; that so when they go from hence into the other world, they may be re-

ceived into eternal glory, with a "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into your Master's joy."

But fearing lest these moral persuasions may not prevail so much upon my readers as I desire they might, they must give me leave further to tell them, that I am here commanded to charge them that are rich in this world to be rich also in good works: and therefore, seeing, as I have shewn, there are few but who in a Scripture sense are rich in this world; in obedience to this command which here is laid upon me, in the Name of the Most High God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God Himself, He wills and requires all those whom He hath blessed with riches in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but that they put their whole trust and confidence only in the Living God, Whose all things are, and Who gives us whatsoever we have: that they do good with what He hath put in their hands, laying it out upon works of piety towards Him, and of charity to the poor, that His worship may be decently performed, and the poor liberally relieved; that they be rich in good works, striving to excel each other in doing good in their generation; that they be ready every moment to distribute, and always willing to communicate to every good work, wherein they can pay their homage, and express their thankfulness to Him for what they have.

V. THOUGHTS UPON SELF-DENIAL.

THE most glorious sight, questionless, that was ever to be seen upon the face of the earth, was to see the Son of God here, to see the Supreme Being and Governor of the world here; to see the Creator of all things conversing here with His Own creatures; to see God Himself with the nature and in the shape of man, walking about upon the surface of the earth, and discoursing with silly mortals here; and that with so much majesty and humility mixed together, that every expression might seem a demonstration that He was both God and man. It is true we were not so happy as to see

this blessed sight; howsoever, it is our happiness that we have heard of it, and have it so exactly described to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had seen it: yea, our Saviour Himself hath pronounced those in a peculiar manner blessed, “who have not seen, and yet have believed,” that is, who never saw Christ in the manger, nor in the Temple, who never saw Him prostrate before His Father in the garden, nor fastened by men unto His cross; who never saw Him preaching the Gospel, nor working miracles to confirm it; who never saw Him before His passion, nor after His resurrection; and yet do as firmly believe whatsoever is recorded of Him, as if they had seen it with their eyes. Such persons our blessed Saviour Himself asserts to be truly blessed, as having such a faith as is “the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.”

John 20. 29.
Heb. 11. 1.

Hence, therefore, although we lived not in our Saviour's time, and therefore saw Him not do as never man did, nor heard Him speak as man never spake, we may notwithstanding be as blessed, or rather more blessed, than they that did, if we do but give credit to what is asserted of Him, and receive and believe what is represented to us in His holy Gospels, where by faith we may still see Him working miracles, and hear Him declaring His will and pleasure to His disciples, as really as if we had then been by Him. And therefore, whatever we read in the Gospel that He spake, we are to hearken as diligently to it, as if we heard Him speak it with our own ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had received it from His Own mouth; for so we do, though not immediately, yet by the infallible pen of them that did so. And seeing He never spake in vain or to no purpose, nor suffered an idle or superfluous word to proceed out of His sacred and Divine mouth; whatsoever He asserted, we are to look upon as necessary to be believed, because He asserted it. And whatsoever He commanded, we are to look upon as necessary to be observed, because He hath commanded it; for we must not think that His assertions are so frivolous, or His commands so impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other or no: no, if we expect to be justified and saved by Him, He expects to

be believed and obeyed by us, without which He will not look upon us as His disciples, nor by consequence as Christians, but as strangers and aliens to Him, whatsoever our professions and pretences are.

It is true, we live in an age wherein Christianity in the general notion of it is highly courted, and all sects and parties amongst us making their pretences to it; whatsoever opinions or circumstances they differ in be sure they all agree in the external profession of the Christian religion, and by consequence in the acknowledgment that they ought to be Christians indeed. But I fear that men are generally mistaken about the notion of true Christianity not thinking it to be so high and Divine a thing as really it is: for if they had true and clear conceptions of it, they would never fancy themselves to be Christians, upon such low and pitiful grounds as usually they do, making as if Christianity consisted in nothing else, but in the external performance of some few particular duties, and in adhering to them that profess it; whereas Christianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature than such would have it; inso-much, that did we but rightly understand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, so as to resolve for the future, to the utmost of our power, to live up to it; to which could I be an instrument of persuading any, how happy should I think myself! Howsoever, it is my duty to endeavour it, and for that purpose I shall now clear up the true notion of Christianity, that we may know, not what it is to be professors and pretenders to Christianity, but what it is to be real Christians, and true disciples of Christ Jesus, such as Christ will own for His in another world.

Now, to know whom Christ will accept for His disciples, our only way is to consult Christ Himself, and to consider what it is that He requires of those that follow Him, in order to be His disciples; a thing as easily understood, as it is generally disregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Christ requires and enjoins all those that would be His disciples, to observe not only some few, but all the commands that He hath laid upon us. “Ye are My John 15. 14. friends,” saith He, and therefore My disciples, “if ye do whatsoever I command you.” So that unless we do what-

soever He commands us, we are so far from being His disciples, that we are indeed His enemies. Nay, they that would be His disciples, must excel and surpass all others in virtue and good works. "Herein," saith He, "is My Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples," yea, and continue in them too. He tells us also, that they that would be His disciples, "must love Him above all things," or rather hate all things in comparison of Him. And "that they love one another, as He hath loved them." To name no more, read but St. Matthew, xvi. 24, and there you may see what it is to be a Christian indeed, or what it is that Christ requires of those who would be His disciples. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me." Did we but understand the true meaning of these words, and order our conversations accordingly, we should both know what it is to be true Christians, and really be so ourselves. For I think there is nothing that Christ requires of those who desire to be His disciples, but we should perform it, could we but observe what is here commanded: which that we may all do, I shall endeavour to give the true meaning of them, and of every particular in them, as they lie in order.

For, saith He, "If any man will come after Me," that is, if any man will be My disciple; for masters, you know, use to go before scholars, and disciples to follow after. And our Saviour here speaks of Himself under the notion of a Master, that hath disciples coming after Him, and saith, that if any one would be one of His disciples, so as to go after Him, "he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him." So that here are three things which our blessed Saviour requires of those that would be His disciples, and by consequence of us who profess to be so; for I dare say there is none of us but desires to be a Christian, or at least to be thought so; for we all know and believe Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of mankind; that none can save us but He, and that there is none of us but He can save; and that all those who truly come to Him for pardon and salvation, shall most certainly have it: hence it is that we would all be thought at least so wise, and to have so much care of our own souls, as to go after Christ and be His disciples. I

hope there are but few but who really desire to be so. Yet I would not have any think that it is so easy a matter to be a disciple of Christ, or a real and true Christian, as the world would make it: no, we may assure ourselves, that as it is the highest honour and happiness we can attain unto, so we shall find it the hardest matter in the world to attain unto it; not in its own nature, but by reason of its contrariety to our natural temper and inclinations. For here we see what it is our blessed Saviour requires of those that would go after Him, even nothing less than to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow Him. All which are far greater things than at the first sight or reading they may seem to be. For,

I. *First*, saith He, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself," which being the first thing which Christ requires of those that go after Him, it is necessary that we search more narrowly into the nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the rest. And therefore, for the opening of this, I shall not trouble the reader with the various expositions and the divers opinions of learned men concerning these words, but only mind him in general, that the self-denial here spoken of is properly opposed to self-love, or that corrupt and vicious habit of the soul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own fancies, wills, desires, interests, and the like, before Christ Himself, and what He is pleased either to promise to us, or require of us. And, therefore, when He commands us to deny ourselves, His will and pleasure in general is this, that we do not indulge or gratify ourselves in any thing that stands in opposition against and comes in competition with His interest in the world, or ours in Him, howsoever near and dear it may be unto us: but to deny ourselves whatsoever is pleasing to ourselves, if it be not so to God and Christ too, so as not to live to ourselves, but only unto Him that died for us; to live as those who are none of our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore should glorify God both in our souls ^{1 Cor. 6. 19,} and in our bodies, which are His. But seeing this is not ^{20.} only the first lesson to be learned by Christ's disciples, but that which is necessarily required in order to whatsoever

else He commands from us, I shall shew you more particularly what it is in yourselves that you are to deny.

1. You must deny your own reasons in matters of Divine revelation, so as to use them no further than only to search into the grounds and motives that we have to believe them to be revealed by God. For this being either proved or supposed, we are not to suffer our reasons to be too curious in searching into them, but believe them upon the word and testimony of God Himself, Who is the supreme truth, or verity itself.

For we, who by all our art and cunning cannot understand the reasons of the most common and obvious things in nature, must not think to comprehend the great mysteries of the Gospel, which, though they be not contrary to our
 1 Cor. 2. 14. reasons, are infinitely above them: "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." So that to the understanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath revealed to us, there is a great deal more required than what we have by nature, even the supernatural assistance of the
 ch. 3. 18. Spirit Himself that revealed them. And, therefore, "if any man" amongst us "seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise," that is, he that would be wise unto salvation, must look upon himself as a fool, as one incapable by nature of understanding the things that belong unto his everlasting peace, without both the revelation and assistance of God Himself; and therefore must not rely upon his own judgment, but only upon God's testimony in what he doth believe, not believing what his reason, but what God's Word tells him; looking upon it as reason enough why he should believe it because God hath said it.

I know this is a hard doctrine to flesh and blood. For,
 Job 11. 12. as Job tells us, "vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Though by nature we be never so foolish, vain, and ignorant, understanding the great mysteries of the Gospel no more than a "wild ass's colt" doth a mathematical demonstration, yet howsoever we would fain be thought very wise men: yea, so wise as to be able to

comprehend matters of the highest, yea, of an infinite nature, within the narrow compass of our finite and shallow capacities. But this is that which we must deny ourselves in, if we desire to be Christ's disciples, so as to acquiesce in His Word, and believe what He asserts, only because He asserts it, without suffering our reason to interpose, but looking upon His Word as more than all the reasons and arguments in the world besides.

2. You must deny your own wills. Our wills, it is true, at first were made upright and perfect, every way correspondent to the will of God Himself, so as to will what He wills, that is, what is really good ; and to nill what He nills, that is, what is really evil. But being now perverted, and corrupted with sin, our wills are naturally inclined to the evil which they should be averse from, and averse from the good which they should be inclined to. So that, instead of choosing the good and refusing the evil, we are generally apt to choose the evil and refuse the good : yet for all that our wills are thus crooked and perverse, we cannot endure to have them crossed or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own wills in every thing, so as neither to do any thing ourselves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but just as ourselves will, who will usually just contrary to what we should. But now they that would be Christ's disciples must not be thus self-willed, but deny themselves the fulfilling of their own wills, when it doth not consist with the will of God to have them fulfilled. This our Lord and Master hath taught us by His example as well as precept, saying, " Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me ; Luke 22. 42. nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." Where we may observe that our blessed Saviour, as man, could not but have a natural averseness from death, as all men by nature have, and that without sin. Yet though Christ's will, as man, was never so pure and perfect, yet He wholly submits it to the will of God. He manifested, indeed, that it was the will of that nature which He had assumed, not to suffer death, saying, " If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me ;" but He shews withal, that the will of man must still be subject to the will of God ; and that man, even as man, must deny his own will, whensoever it runneth not exactly paral-

lel with God's, saying, "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done."

And if Christ Himself denied His Own most pure and perfect will, that His Father's might be accomplished, how much more cause have we to deny our wills, which, by nature, are always contrary to His will, yea, and to our own good too, preferring generally that which is evil and destructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us! And verily a great part of true Christianity consisteth in thus resigning our wills to God's, not minding so much which way our own inclinations bend, as what His pleasure and command is. A notable instance whereof we have in old Eli, who questionless could not but be very willing that the iniquity of his sons might be forgiven, and his family prosper in the world: yet, howsoever, when God had manifested His pleasure to him that his house should be destroyed,

1 Sam. 3. 18. he submitted his own will wholly unto God's, saying, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." And whosoever of us would be Christ's disciple indeed, must be sure thus to deny and renounce his own will, whensoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, so as even to will, that not his own will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and Master Himself hath taught us each day to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." And whosoever hath learned this art of making his own will bow and stoop to God's, hath made a very good progress in the Christian religion, especially in that part of it which requires us to deny ourselves.

3. And seeing we must deny our wills, we must needs deny our affections too, which are indeed nothing else but the several motions of the will towards good and evil; but usually they are so disorderly and irregular, as to place themselves upon objects directly opposite to what they were designed for; for that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; desire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to desire; rejoice in those things which we ought to grieve for, and are grieved at such things as we ought to rejoice in: so that if we suffer our affections to move according to their natural tendency and corrupt inclinations, we shall be so far from

going after Christ, that we shall continually be running from Him. And therefore it must be our great care and study to bridle our affections, deny them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper objects; yea, and to deny ourselves, too, the lawful use of such things as our affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for example, it is lawful, yea, our duty to love our relations; but, if our love to them becomes exorbitant, so as to love them more than God, our love to them must be turned into hatred in comparison of our love to Him. And whatsoever lawful thing it is that we take pleasure in, if once we find that our pleasure in that extinguisheth, or but damps that pleasure which we used, or ought to have in God, we are to deny ourselves such pleasures as these are, and rather despise ourselves than God. Luke 14. 26.

4. Yea, we must deny ourselves moreover the use and enjoyment of our estates and earthly possessions, whensoever they come into competition with His glory: so that if it comes to that point, that we must either leave our estates to enjoy Christ, or leave Christ to enjoy our estates; we must be willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatsoever else we have rather than our interest in Christ. For indeed he is not worthy to be Christ's disciple that doth not prefer Him before all things else; neither he that loves the world at all in comparison of Christ: "For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2. 15. And therefore he that would be Christ's disciple indeed, must fix his heart so fast on Christ, that it hang loose and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concerned about them, than as if he had them not. So that though he have all things besides Christ, he must have nothing but Him, or at least in comparison of Him; yea, be ready to part with all, that he may gain Christ. And though many of us may think this a hard saying, we may assure ourselves it is no more than what we must do, if we desire to be Christ's disciples. Luke 14. 33.

5. Furthermore, we must deny ourselves those sins especially, and lusts which we have or do still indulge ourselves in; for thus the Gospel teacheth you in a particular manner

Tit. 2. 12. "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts." And therefore we in vain pretend to be true Christians, so long as we live in any one known sin with any love unto it, or delight in it. I suppose none of my readers guilty of all sins, and I fear there are few but live in some. No man but may be naturally averse from some sins, but it is very rare to find one that is inclined to none; for ordinarily every man hath his darling, his beloved sin, his own sin, as David himself once had, though he afterwards kept himself from it. So I fear none of my readers but have some sin, which he may in a peculiar manner call his own, as being that which his thoughts run most upon, and his desires are carried most unto, which he labours most after, and takes most pleasure in, which he is most loath to be reprov'd for, and most easily overcome by. Now this, and whatsoever other sins any of us are addicted to, we must wholly leave and utterly renounce, if ever we desire to be Christ's disciples. And therefore, so long as any of us live in any known sin, as in pride or prodigality, in oppression or covetousness, in malice or uncleanness, in drunkenness, uncharitableness, or any other sin whatsoever, we must not think ourselves to be Christians indeed, Christ will never own us for His disciples, for so long as we live in any known sin, it is that sin, not Christ, that is our master; and therefore, if we would list ourselves into His service, we must be sure to deny ourselves whatsoever we know to be offensive to Him.

6. There is still another thing behind wherein we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ; and that is, we must deny and renounce all our self-righteousness, and all hopes and confidences from ourselves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of self-denial; for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own nets, to burn incense to our own drags, to boast of our own good works, and to pride ourselves with the conceit of our own righteousness. Though we be never so sinful, we would not be thought to be so, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by men, but by God Himself, for something or other which ourselves do; though, when all comes to all, we know not what that should be; but howsoever, the pride of our hearts is such, that we are loath

to go out of ourselves to look for righteousness, or to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reason that justification by faith in Christ hath had so many adversaries in the world; mankind in general being so much in love with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilify their own obedience and good works, so much as to think they stand in need of any other righteousness besides their own, as if their own righteousness was so perfect that God Himself could find no fault with it, nor make any exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous persons for it.

Whereas, alas! there is not the best action that ever a mere mortal did, but, if examined by the strict rules of justice, it is far from being good, yea, so far, that God Himself may justly pronounce it evil, and by consequence condemn the person that did it for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any man doeth or can do, for which he can in reason expect to be justified before God; our very righteousness being, as the Prophet tells, "but as filthy rags," and our most holy performances fraught [Isa. 64. 6.] with sin and imperfection, and therefore so far from justifying us, that we may justly be condemned for them; but this mankind doth not love to hear of, the pride of our hearts being such, that by all means we must have something in ourselves whereof to glory before God Himself. But woe be to that person who hath no other righteousness but his own, wherein to appear before the Judge of the whole world; for, however specious his actions may seem to men, they will be adjudged sins before the eternal God.

7. He, therefore, that would come to Christ, although he must labour after righteousness to the utmost of his power, yet, when he has done all, he must renounce it, and look upon himself as an unprofitable servant: "For Christ Matt. 9. 13. came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," that is, 'He came not to call such persons as think they have righteousness enough of their own to serve their turns, for such persons think they have no need of Him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them: but He calls sinners, such as may, perhaps, be as righteous as the other;

Phil. 3. 6.

ver. 7-9.

but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for ever, unless they have something else to trust to than their own good works and obedience to the Moral Law.' Such persons, therefore, Christ came to call; and if they come to Him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in Him: and if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be His disciples, we must be sure to look upon ourselves as sinners, as deserving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatsoever we have done; we must renounce all our own righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for so really we have not. And when we have laid aside all thoughts of our own righteousness, as to the matter of our justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace another's, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ. Thus St. Paul, though he had as much, yea, more reason to trust in the flesh or in himself than others; for himself saith, "that as touching the righteousness which is of the law, he was blameless." "Yet," saith he, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Thus, therefore, it is, that all those must do who desire to be, as St. Paul was, real disciples of Jesus Christ; as we must forsake our sins, so we must renounce our righteousness too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of self-denial, thus to deny ourselves all that pride, pleasure, and confidence, which we used to take in the thoughts of our own righteousness and obedience to the Law of God; but we must remember, that the first thing which our Saviour enjoins those that come after Him, is to deny themselves.

Thus I have shewn what it is in ourselves that we must deny, and how it is that we must deny ourselves, if we desire to go after Christ. We must deny ourselves the curiosity of searching too much into the mysteries of the Gospel by

the light of our own clouded reasons; we must deny our self-conceit, our self-will, our self-love, self-interest, self-confidence, and whatsoever proceeds from and terminates in our sensual and sinful selves, so as to have no delight in, nor dependence upon ourselves; yea, we must so deny ourselves, as to be quite taken off of our former selves, and become other creatures than what before we were. Thus St. Ambrose explains these words, saying, “*Seipsum sibi homo abneget, et totus mutetur:*” ‘Let a man deny himself to himself, so as to be wholly changed from what he was.’ But then you will say, what need is there of all this trouble; what reason can be given that a man must deny himself before he can be a true Christian?

[De Pœnit.
lib. ii. cap.
10. 96; vol.
ii. p. 437, a.
Ed. Ben.]

To that I answer, it is reason enough that Christ hath commanded us to do it; and surely He best knows whom He will accept of as His disciples, and what is necessary to be done in order to our being so: and He hath said in plain terms, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself;” implying, that he that doth not deny himself cannot go after Him.

But besides that, there is an impossibility in the thing itself, that any one should be a true Christian, or go after Christ, and not deny himself; as may be easily perceived, if they will but consider what true Christianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real Christian. A true Christian, we know, is one that lives by faith, and not by sight: “that looks not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen;” that believes whatsoever Christ hath said, trusteth on whatsoever He hath promised, and obeyeth whatsoever He hath commanded; that receiveth Christ as His only Priest to make atonement for him, as his only Prophet to instruct, and as his only Lord and Master to rule and govern him. In a word, a Christian is one that gives up himself and all he hath to Christ, Who gave Himself and all He hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true Christianity implies and supposes the denial of ourselves, without which it is as impossible for a man to be a Christian, as it is for a subject to be rebellious and loyal to his prince at the same time; and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we go out of ourselves before we can go to Him, we

[2 Cor. 4.
18.]

must strip ourselves of our very selves before we can put on Christ; for Christ Himself hath told us that “no man
 Matt. 6. 24. can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.” We “cannot serve both God and Mammon,” Christ and ourselves too; so that we must either deny ourselves to go after Christ, or else deny Christ to go after ourselves, so as to mind our own selfish ends and designs in the world.

Wherefore I hope I need not use any other arguments to persuade any to deny themselves in the sense already explained; I dare say there is none amongst us but would willingly be what we profess, even a real Christian, and so go after Christ here as to come to Him hereafter. But we have now seen how Christ Himself hath told us, that “we must deny ourselves,” if we desire to serve and enjoy Him: and verily it is a hard case if we cannot deny ourselves for Him who so far denied Himself for us as to lay down His Own life to redeem ours. He Who was equal to God Himself, yea, Who Himself was the true God, so far denied
 [Isa. 53. 3.] Himself as to become man, yea, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs,” for us; and cannot we deny ourselves so much as a fancy, a conceit, a sin, or lust, for Him? How then can we expect that He should own us for His friends, His servants, or disciples? No, He will never do it, neither can we in reason expect that He should give Himself and all the merits of His death and passion unto us, so long as we think much to give ourselves to Him, or to deny ourselves for Him. And therefore, if we desire to be made partakers of all those glorious things which He hath purchased with His Own most precious blood for the sons of men, let us begin here, indulge our flesh no longer, but deny ourselves whatsoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each day more and more to live above ourselves, above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world; live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own, but Christ’s: His by creation, it was He that made us; His by preservation, it is He that maintains us; and His by redemption, it is He that hath purchased and redeemed us

with His Own blood. And therefore let us deny ourselves for the future to our very selves, whose we are not, and devote ourselves to Him Whose alone we are; by this we shall manifest ourselves to be Christ's disciples indeed, especially if we do not only deny ourselves, but also take up our cross and follow Him; which brings me,

II. To the second thing which our blessed Saviour here requires of those who would go after Him, even "to take up their cross."

Where, by the cross, we are to understand whatsoever troubles or calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our duty to God or man, which they that would go after Christ must take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor sinking under them, for we must not think that Christ invites us to an earthly paradise of idleness or outward pleasure, as if we had nothing to do or to suffer for Him: for even as men we cannot but find many crosses in the world, but as Christians we must expect more, for Christ Himself hath told us, "that John 16. 33. in the world we shall have tribulation." And therefore whatsoever we meet with is no more than what we are to look for; especially, if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to Heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub, for God Himself hath told us that it is "through many Acts 14. 22. tribulations" that we must "enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." And therefore we must not think to be carried up to Heaven with the breath of popular applause, nor to swim through a deluge of carnal pleasures into the haven of everlasting happiness. No, we must look to be tossed to and fro in this world, as in a raging and tempestuous ocean, and never look for perpetual calmness and tranquillity, until we have got above the clouds, yea, even above the sun and stars themselves. This world was always a world of trouble, and ever will be; its very friends, and they that have their portion here, can find no quiet nor satisfaction in it; but the disciples of Christ "they are not of this world," as Christ John 17. 14. Himself tells us. And therefore no wonder if the world frowns more upon them than others; the way they walk in is opposite to the world, it is enmity itself to the flesh, and

therefore no wonder if they meet with so much enmity and opposition here ; the way wherein they go after Christ is a cross way, it is cross to sin, cross to Satan, cross to the world, cross to our very selves as we are by nature, and by consequence cross to all men in the world but Christ's disciples ; and therefore it is no wonder they meet with so many crosses in it. But howsoever, if we desire to go after Christ, He hath told us beforehand what we must expect ; as He hath borne the cross before us, He expects that we now bear it after Him ; yea, we must not only bear it, but take it up too : not that we should run ourselves into danger, but that we should balk no duty to avoid it ; so as to be willing and ready to undergo the greatest suffering rather than to commit the least sin, and to run the greatest danger rather than neglect the smallest duty. If, whilst we are walking in the narrow path of holiness, there happens to lie a cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other side of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn at it, but we must patiently take it up, and carry it along with us ; if it be a little heavy at first, it will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progress towards Heaven.

But here we must have a great care to understand our Saviour's meaning, and so our own duty aright ; for we must not think that every trouble we meet with in the world is the cross of Christ, for we may suffer for our fancy or humour, or perhaps for our sin and transgression of the laws of God or men ; and if so, it is our own cross, not Christ's, which we take upon us ; we may thank ourselves for it ; I

1 Pet. 2. 19, am sure Christ hath no reason to thank us : " For this is
20. thank-worthy," saith the Apostle, " if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." And therefore the duty which our Saviour here imposeth on us in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to suffer what we can for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the Gospel, and that we omit no duty nor commit any sin for fear of suffering ; not to think much of any trouble that befalls us for Christ's sake, but rather to rejoice at it, even

Acts 5. 41. as the Apostles rejoiced that " they were counted worthy to

suffer shame for His Name," which was a clear instance of their performing the duty here enjoined both them and us, under the name of "taking up our cross."

And I hope there is none of us can take it ill, that Christ hath imposed so severe a duty upon us; for we may assure ourselves He requires no more of us than what Himself hath undergone before; so that we can suffer nothing for Him but what He hath suffered before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our hearts? So had He, Matt. xxvi. 38. Have we pains and tortures in our bodies? So had He, Matt. xxvii. 29, 30. Are we derided and scoffed at? So was He, Matt. xxvii. 31. Are we arraigned and condemned, yea, do we suffer death itself? It is no more than what our Lord and Master hath done before. And let us remember what He told us when He was upon the earth, "The disciple is not Matt. 10. 24. above his master, nor the servant above his lord." If we be Christ's disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world than Christ Himself did, neither indeed, can we fare so bad; for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for Him as He hath undergone for us, ours being only the sufferings of men, His the sufferings of One Who was God as well as man; whereby sufferings in general are sanctified to our human nature, it having already undergone them in the person of the Son of God; so that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea, death itself, or any other calamity whatsoever in this world, seeing the Son of God Himself, He that made the world, underwent the same while Himself was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to stoop down and take up the cross of Christ, as considering that Christ, having borne it before us, hath so blessed and sanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, yea, and a pleasant cross, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully, and constantly, as they ought to do, especially seeing it is such a cross as leads unto a crown, and whatsoever we can do or suffer for Christ here, will be fully recompensed with glory hereafter; and therefore, instead of being troubled to take up our cross, we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take up.

Thus we see in few words what it is which our Saviour

commands from us, when He enjoins us to deny ourselves, and take up our cross; even that we do not gratify ourselves in any thing that is ungrateful unto Him, nor grudge to take up any cross, or suffer any trouble we meet with in the world for His sake, thinking nothing too dear to forsake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for Him, Who thought not His Own life too dear, nor the cross itself too heavy to bear for us. What now remains, but that, knowing our Saviour's pleasure, we should all resolve to do it? There is none of us but hope and desire to be saved by Him; but that we can never be, unless we observe what He hath prescribed in order to our Salvation: and amongst other things, we see how He hath commanded us to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross. As any of us, therefore, desire to be Christians indeed, so as to see Christ's face with comfort in another world, let us bethink ourselves seriously what sins we have hitherto indulged ourselves in. I fear there are but few, if any, amongst us, but are conscious to themselves that they have, and do still live, either in the constant neglect of some known duty, or else in the frequent commission of some beloved sin: what that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to men's own consciences; only I desire them to deal faithfully with their own souls, and not suffer themselves to be fooled into a fond and vain persuasion that they have any interest in Christ, or are truly His disciples, until they deny themselves that sin, whatsoever it is, which they have hitherto indulged themselves in. And let us not think that we shall deny ourselves any real pleasure or profit by renouncing our sins; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God, or profit in losing our own souls? No, we shall gratify ourselves, more than we can imagine, by denying ourselves, as much as we are able, whatsoever is offensive or displeasing unto God; for we may be sure, He that came into the world on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good; neither would he ever have obliged us to deny ourselves, if we could have been saved without it; and as for the cross, that He was so well acquainted with, that He would never have imposed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore, if we be what we

pretend, real and true Christians, let us manifest it to the world, and to our own consciences, by denying ourselves whatsoever Christ hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever He hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any cross that He for His Own sake shall suffer to be laid upon us ; still remembering, that self-denial, though it be unpleasant, is a most necessary duty ; and the cross, though it be never so heavy, is but short, and hath nothing less than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves.

VI. THOUGHTS UPON STRIVING TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE.

As certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we shall all be in another world : either in a world of happiness, or else in a world of misery ; or, if you will, either in Heaven or in Hell. For these are the two only places which all mankind, from the beginning of the world to the end of it, must live in for evermore, some in the one, some in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here ; and therefore it is worth the while to take a view and prospect now and then of both these places, and it will not be amiss if we do it now : for which end I desire the reader, in his serious and composed thoughts, to attend me first into the celestial mansions, above yonder glorious sun and the stars themselves, where not only the Cherubims and Seraphims, Angels and Archangels, but many also of our brethren, the sons of men, at this very moment are enjoying the presence, and singing forth the praises, of the Most High God. There are the spirits of just men made perfect, perfect in themselves, and perfect in all their actions, perfectly free from all both sin and misery, perfectly full of all true grace and glory, all their faculties being reduced to that most perfect and excellent frame and constitution, that their understandings are continually taken up with the contemplations of the supreme truth, and their wills in the embracement of the chiefest good ; so that all the inclinations of their souls rest

in God as in their proper centre, in Whom by consequence they enjoy as much as they can desire, yea, as much as they can be made capable of desiring : for all those infinite perfections that are concentrated in God Himself, are now in their possession, to solace and delight themselves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them ; by which means they are as happy as God Himself can make them ; insomuch that at this very moment methinks we may all behold them so ravished, so transported with their celestial joys, that it may justly strike us into admiration, how ever creatures which were once sinful could be made so pure, so perfect, and altogether so happy as they are. And could we but leave our bodies for awhile below, and go up to take a turn in the New Jerusalem that is above, we could not but be ravished and transported at the very sight both of the place and inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greatest emperors of this world, with nothing else than crowns of glory on their heads, and sceptres of righteousness in their hands ; where they think of nothing but of the glory of God, discourse of nothing but praising Him, do nothing but adore and worship Him : in a word, whatsoever is agreeable to our natures, whatsoever is desirable to our souls, whatsoever can any way conduce to make men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed by all and every person that is in Heaven. Whereas, on the other side, if we bring down our thoughts from Heaven and send them as low as Hell, to consider the most deplorable estate and condition of those who inhabit the regions of darkness, them we shall find as miserable as the others are happy ; not only in that they are deprived of the vision and fruition of the chiefest good, but likewise in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as Infinite Justice can adjudge them to, and Infinite Power inflict upon them, insomuch that could we lay our ear to the entrance of that bottomless pit, what howlings and shriekings should we hear, what weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, in the midst of those infernal flames,

Mark 9. 44. where, as our Saviour Himself tells us, “The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” That is, where their consciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former sins, and the fire of God’s wrath is

continually burning in them, never to be quenched or abated : for, certainly, as the smiles and favour of the eternal God constitute the joys of Heaven, so do His frowns and anger make up the flames of Hell. To see Him that made us displeased with us, to see Mercy itself to frown upon us, to see the great and All-glorious Creator of the world, the chiefest Good, to look angrily upon us, and to shew Himself offended at us, and incensed against us ! Methinks the very thoughts of it are sufficient to make the stoutest heart amongst us tremble. But then what shall we think of those poor souls that see and feel it ? What shall we think of them ? Questionless, they are more miserable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot possibly conceive either the greatness of Heaven's glory or the sharpness of Hell's torments ; only this we know, and may be certain of, that whatsoever is ungrateful to their minds, whatsoever is troublesome to their thoughts, whatsoever is contrary to their desires, whatsoever is painful to their bodies, or whatsoever is or can be destructive and tormenting to their souls, that, all they who are once in Hell shall fear and feel, and that for ever.

But this is too sad and doleful a subject to insist on long, neither should I have mentioned it, but for our own good, and to prepare us the better, both for the understanding and improving the advice of our Saviour, "Enter ye in Matt. 7. 13, 14. at the strait gate ; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat : because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The meaning of which words, in brief, may be reduced to these three heads :

I. That it is an easy matter to go to Hell, that place of torments we have now been describing, and by consequence that many go thither : for the gate is wide, and the way is broad, that leadeth thither.

II. That it is a hard and difficult thing to get to Heaven, that place of joys we before spake of, and by consequence that but few get thither : "For strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to it."

III. Howsoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have

us strive to get to Heaven, so as to press through that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way, that leadeth into life.

I. As for the first, that the gate is wide, and the way broad, that leads to hell, or that it is an easy matter to go thither, I need not use many words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it, I dare say there is scarce any one but believes it, yea, and hath oftentimes found it too true by experience, even that it is an easy matter to sin, and that we know, is the broad way that leads to hell; so broad, that they who walk in it, can find no bounds or limits in it, wherewithin to contain themselves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are still in the ready way to ruin and destruction. And usually it is as plain as broad, so that men rarely meet with any roughness or trouble in it, but rather with all the pleasures and delights which they desire, who look no higher than to please the flesh; yea, whatsoever it is that they naturally desire, they still meet with it in the road to hell; and whatsoever is ungrateful and irksome to them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of sin. There are no crosses to be taken up, no self to be denied, but rather indulged and gratified; there are no such tedious and troublesome things as examining our hearts, and mortifying our lusts, as praying or hearing, as fasting or watching: these are only to be found in the narrow path that leads to Heaven; the broad way to hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being strewed all along with carnal pleasures and sensual delights, with popular applause and earthly riches, and such fine things as silly mortals use to be taken with.

And hence it is, that, as our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide gate that leads to ruin, because they see not whither it leads, but they see the baits and allurements which are in it, which they cannot but crowd about as fishes about the hook, or as flies about a candle, till they be destroyed. Yea, this way to destruction is so broad, that almost all the world is continually walking in it; the gate so wide, that thousands at a time pass through it. And, therefore, we may well conclude, it is a very easy thing to go to that place of torments which

even now we spake of, or rather that it is a hard, a difficult matter, to keep out of it, the way being so narrow that carries from it, that it is a difficult thing to find it; and the way so broad that leads unto it, that none can miss of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

But I hope none of my readers have so, God forbid they should have, a mind to go to Hell: their taking religious books into their hands is rather an argument that they have a mind to go to Heaven, and read on purpose to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all opportunities of finding out the way to bliss; for we may assure ourselves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but much more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, so that there is scarce any path to be seen, most people going either on one side or else on the other side of it; some running into the by-paths of error, heresy, or schism; others into the broad way of profaneness or security: insomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right path that leads directly to the New Jerusalem, the place of rest. I speak not this of myself; no, Christ Himself, that came from Heaven to earth, on purpose to shew us the way from earth to Heaven, saith, that "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it!"

II. And let not any think that Christ spoke these words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what He said or no. For, questionless, one great reason why so few ever come to Heaven, is because most think it so easy to get thither, that they need not take any care or pains about it. For even amongst ourselves, to whom the Gospel is so clearly revealed, men generally think if they do but read the Scriptures, and hear sermons, and live honestly with their neighbours, so as to harm nobody, but pay every one their own, then they shall as surely come to Heaven as if they were there already; nay, many are so simple as to think that their separation from the Church militant on earth is the way to bring them to the Church triumphant in Heaven; and others so ridiculous as to believe that a death-bed repentance is sufficient to entitle them to eternal life. But stay a while: it is not so easy a matter to

get to Heaven. Indeed to me it seems one of the greatest mysteries in the world, that ever any man or woman should come thither; that such sinful worms as we are, who are born in sin, and live so long in sin and rebellion against the great Creator of the world, should ever be received so far into His grace and favour, as to enjoy life and eternal happiness in Him. And did we look no further than ourselves, we might justly despair of ever obtaining so transcendent glory which we are so altogether unworthy of. But the goodness of God both is and hath been so great to mankind, that there is none of us but, in and through the merits of Christ Jesus, is in a capacity of it. But we must not think that it is so easy a thing to come to Heaven, as the Devil, the world, and our own base hearts, would persuade us it is: if we do, we are never likely to come thither; no, we may assure ourselves, as Heaven is the greatest good that we can attain, so doth it require our greatest care and study imaginable to attain it.

This, therefore, is that which I shall endeavour to convince men of, and account myself happy if I can do it. For I dare say, there is none of us but desire to see Christ in glory, and to be happy with Him and in Him for ever; but that we can never be, unless we do whatsoever is required of us in order to it; and if we think it is so easy a matter to do whatsoever is required of us, I have just cause to suspect that we never yet made trial of it, nor set ourselves seriously upon the performance of those duties which are enjoined us here in reference to our being happy for ever. For if we have set upon it in good earnest, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reason of our natural averseness from what is good, and inclinations unto evil. For we

Heb. 12. 14. all know that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

So that holiness is the way, the direct and only way that leads to Heaven; neither is there any way imaginable of being happy hereafter, but by being holy here. And though it be an easy thing to profess holiness, and to perform some external acts of it, yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, so as we must be if ever we would go to Heaven, this is every whit as difficult as the other is easy.

1. For, first, I suppose all will grant that He is not truly

holy that lives in any known sin, as the Apostle intimates, saying, "He that is born of God doth not commit sin." ^{1 John 3. 9.} And therefore he that still indulgeth himself in the commission of any known sin, he is not yet regenerate or born of God, he is not truly holy. So that to our being so holy here as that we may be happy hereafter, it is absolutely and indispensably necessary that we forsake and avoid to the utmost of our power whatsoever is offensive unto God, and contrary to His laws. But it is as difficult as it is necessary to forsake sin as we ought to do. It is an easy matter, I confess, to rail at sin, to backbite others, or blame ourselves for it. But that is not the business; but to loathe our sins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor as much as ever we desired them, and to be as much averse from them as ever we were inclined to them; to forsake sin as sin, and by consequence all sin whatsoever, one as well as another; so as to deny ourselves all that pleasure we were wont to take in any sin, and all that seeming profit which we used to receive by it, and that too out of love to God, and fear of His displeasure: this is to forsake sin indeed, but it is sooner spoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of time, and skill, and pains, to get so great a conquest over ourselves as this is, to cut off our right hand, to pluck out our right eye, and cast it from us; even renounce and forsake those very beloved and darling sins, which the temper and constitution of our bodies, the corruption of our hearts, and constant custom and practice, hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very natures must be changed before we can ever leave them. And, therefore, it must needs be a matter of as great difficulty as it is of moment to master and subdue those sins and lusts that have been long predominant in us; which I dare say many of us have found by their own sad and woeful experience, having struggled perhaps many years against some corruption, and yet to this day have not got it under, nor totally subdued it. And it is such, and such alone, who are competent judges in this case, for they that never strove against their sins, cannot know how strong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to those who have made it their business to destroy and mortify their lusts, that I appeal

whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore must needs acknowledge it to be so ; and, by consequence, that it is no easy matter to get to Heaven, seeing it is so hard to keep out of Hell, and to avoid those sins which otherwise will certainly bring us thither ; every sin unrepented of having eternal punishment entailed upon it.

2. And if it be so hard to forsake sin, how difficult must it needs be to perform all those duties, and to exert all those graces, which are necessarily required, in order to our attaining everlasting happiness ! It is true, praying and hearing, which are the ordinary means for the obtaining true grace and holiness, are duties very common and customary amongst us, but they are never the easier because they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accustomed to a careless and perfunctory performing these duties, cannot but find it a hard and difficult matter to keep our hearts so close unto them, as to perform them as we ought to do, and so as that we may be really said to do them. For we must not think that sitting at church while the Word of God is preached, is hearing the word of God, or that being present there whilst prayers are read, is real praying : no, no ; there is a great deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright ; insomuch that, for my own part, I really think that prayer, as it is the highest, so it is the hardest duty that we can be engaged in. All the faculties of our souls, as well as members of our bodies, being obliged to put forth themselves in their several capacities, to the due performance of it.

And as for those several graces and virtues which our souls must be adorned withal, before ever they can come to Heaven, though it be easy to talk of them, it is not so to act them. I shall instance only in some few : as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's sake ; to hope on nothing but God's promises, and to fear nothing but his displeasure ; to love other men's persons so as to hate their vices, and so to hate their vices as still to love their persons ; not to covet riches when we have them not, nor trust on them when we have them ; to deny ourselves that we may please God, and to take up our cross that we may

follow Christ ; to live above the world whilst we are in it, and to despise it while we use it ; to be always upon our watch and guard, strictly observing not only the outward actions of our life, but the inward motions of our hearts ; to hate those very sins which we used to love, and to love those very duties which we used to hate ; to choose the greatest affliction before the least sin, and to neglect the getting of the greatest gain rather than the performing of the smallest duty ; to believe truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the testimony of one whom we never saw ; to submit our wills to God's, and delight ourselves in obeying Him ; to be patient under sufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below ; to be ready and willing to do and suffer any thing we can for Him Who hath done and suffered so much for us ; to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and rescue the oppressed, to the utmost of our power : in a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Christ, as loyal to our prince, as faithful to our friends, as loving to our enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just in our dealings, as eminent in all true grace and virtue, as if we were to be saved by it, and yet put no confidence in it, but still look upon ourselves as unprofitable servants, and depend upon Christ, and Christ alone, for pardon and salvation. I suppose I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform such duties, and to act such graces as these are ; but this, let me tell the reader,

III. That how hard, how difficult soever it is, it must be done, if ever we design to come to Heaven ; and, by consequence, it is no easy matter to come thither. Seeing, therefore, the way that leads to Heaven is thus narrow and hard, it is no wonder that there are but few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour Himself assures us ; for people generally love to swim with the stream, to run with the multitude, though it be into the gulf of sin and misery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow way, and keeping himself within those bounds and limits wherewith it is enclosed ; and this seems to have been the occasion of these words in the Gospel of St. Luke, where one said unto Christ, “ Lord, are there few that be saved ? ”

And our Saviour answered in these words, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Intimating, not only that there are but few that shall be saved, but likewise that many of those who seek to be saved shall not attain it; not as if any of those who really and cordially make it their business, to look after Heaven, can ever miss of it; but, that many of those who, presuming upon their seeming obedience and good works, shall think and seek that way to enter into the Kingdom of God, "shall not be able. For many will say unto Me at that day," saith He, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name cast out devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? and then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." And if many of those who are great professors of religion, and make a plausible show of piety in the world, shall, notwithstanding, come short of eternal happiness, and if of those "many which are called there are but few chosen," we may well conclude there are but few, very few indeed, that walk in the narrow path that leads to life, in comparison of those innumerable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to ruin and destruction. One great reason whereof is, because men generally, though they desire to go to Heaven, yet will not believe it to be so hard a thing as really it is, to get thither; and therefore, setting aside the superficial performance of some few external duties, they give themselves no trouble, nor take any pains about it; as if Heaven was so contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look after it; or howsoever, as if it was so easy a thing to attain it, that they cannot miss of it whether they look after it or no. Whereas, questionless, as Heaven is the greatest happiness that we are capable of, so is it the hardest matter in the world for any of us to attain it.

I say not this to discourage any one, but rather to excite and encourage all to a greater care and diligence in the prosecution of eternal happiness, than ordinarily men seem to have. It is my hearty desire and prayer that every soul among us may live, and be happy for ever; but that we

Matt. 7. 22,
23.

Matt. 20.
16.

can never be, unless we be serious, earnest, and constant in looking after it, more than after all things in the world besides. And therefore it is that I have endeavoured to convince men that it is not so easy a thing as they seem to make it, to go to Heaven, the path being so exceeding narrow that leads unto it; which I hope by this time we are all persuaded of, so as to be resolved within ourselves to play no longer with religion, but to set upon it in good earnest, so as to make it not only our great, but our only business and design in this world to prepare for another, and to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and, by consequence, to walk in that narrow way of true piety and virtue that leads to Heaven, without going aside into the vices on either hand; or howsoever, to use the utmost of our endeavour to observe the rules which Christ hath prescribed us, in order to our living with Him for ever. And oh that I knew what words to take unto myself, and what arguments to use, whereby to prevail with every soul of us to make it our business to get to Heaven; and, by consequence, to walk directly in the narrow way, and through the strait gate, that leads unto it. What influence or effect they may have upon the readers I know not; howsoever, I shall endeavour to present them with some such considerations, as I hope, by the blessing of God and the assistance of His grace, may be so forcible and prevalent upon them, if seriously weighed, that they should not methinks be able to resist them.

Let us consider, therefore, in the first place, that though it be never so hard to get to Heaven, yet it is possible; and though there be but few that come thither, yet there are some, and why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? There are many perfect and most glorious saints in Heaven at this moment, which once were sinful creatures upon earth as we now are; but it seems the way thither was not so narrow but that they could walk in it, nor the gate so strait but they could pass through it; and why may not we as well as they? We have the same natures whereby we are capable of happiness as they had; we have the same Scriptures to direct us to it as they had; we have the same promises of assistance as they had; we have the same Saviour as they had; and why then may not

we get to the same place where they are? Is the way more narrow, and the gate more strait, to us than it was to them? No, surely, it is every way the same. Why, then, should we despair of ever attaining everlasting glory, seeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it? It is true, if no mortal men had ever got to Heaven, or God had said none should ever come thither, then indeed it would be in vain for us to expect it, or to use any means to attain unto it: but seeing many of our brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way, or the difficulty of getting thither, should never discourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us the more diligent in the prosecution of it: especially considering, in the next place, that we are not only as yet in a capacity of getting to Heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God

1 Tim. 2. 4. Himself, for He would have all men to be saved, and "to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Yea, He hath

Ezek. 33. 11. sworn by Himself, saying, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live:" and therefore calls upon us all, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Hence it is that He sent

Isa. 55. 1. His Prophets to invite us, "Ho, every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters." Yea, He came down in His Own person to earth, on purpose to invite us to Heaven, and to

Matt. 11. 28. direct us the way thither: "Come to Me," saith He, "all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

John 3. 16. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Whence we may observe, that there is no exception made against any person whatsoever, nor, by consequence, against any of us. It is the will, yea, and the command of God too, that we all turn from our evil ways and live, and that every soul amongst us walk in that narrow way that leads unto eternal bliss; and

Hos. 13. 9. therefore, if any of us do perish, "Our blood will be upon our own heads, for our own destruction is from ourselves." For it is nothing but the perverseness of our own wills, and

the hardness, pride, and obstinacy of our own hearts, that can keep any soul of us out of Heaven, howsoever difficult it is to come thither. For God hath shewn how desirous He is to have our company there, in that He is still pleased to grant us both the space and means of repentance. If He had no mind to have us saved, He could have shut us up long ago in Hell; but He is so far from that, that He doth not only as yet continue our abode on earth, and lengthen our tranquillity here, but He still vouchsafes unto us whatsoever is necessary, yea, whatsoever can any ways conduce to our eternal happiness; we have His Scriptures, we have His Sabbaths, we have His Ordinances; we have His Sacraments, we have His Ministers, we have the promise of His Spirit, we have the overtures of Christ, and of all the merits of His death and passion made unto us; and what can be desired more to make men happy? and yet, as if all this had not been enough, He still continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea, and beseeching us most affectionately to turn that our souls may live; for we His ministers are ambassadors to mankind for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: "We pray you in Christ's 2 Cor. 5. 20. stead to be reconciled to God." And He hath sent me unto you that read this, in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to death into the narrow way that leads to life and happiness: in His Name, therefore, I exhort, yea, and "beseech you, by the mercies Rom. 12. 1. of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," and never leave until you have got possession of eternal glory.

Nor let us be discouraged at any difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will soon be over; howsoever hard and difficult any duty may seem at first, by use and custom it will soon grow easy. The worst is at first setting out; when once we have been used awhile to walk in this narrow way, we shall find it to be both easy and pleasant: for, as the wise man tells us, the ways of wisdom, or true piety, "are Prov. 3. 17. ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Though it be rough at first, by treading it will soon grow plain; we shall soon find the words of Christ to be true, that His

Matt. 11. 30. "yoke is easy, and His burden light." All is but to be willing and obedient, and resolved upon it, to press through all duties and difficulties whatsoever to get to Heaven, and then, by the merits of Christ's passion and the assistance of His grace, we need not fear but we shall come thither.

And verily, although the way to Heaven should prove not only narrow, but hedged in with briers and thorns, so that we should meet with nothing but crosses and troubles in our going to it, yet Heaven will make amends for all.

Rom. 8. 18. For we may well reckon with the Apostle, "that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." So that whatsoever pains we are at, whatsoever trouble we suffer in order to our attaining everlasting happiness, bears no proportion at all to the happiness we attain by it; which is so great, so exceeding great, that our tongues can neither express, nor our minds as yet conceive it: consisting not only in the freedom from all evil, but also in the enjoyment of whatsoever is really and truly good; even whatsoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and completely happy: so that no duty can be too great to undertake, no trouble too heavy to undergo for it. Wherefore, that I

1 Cor. 15. 58. may use the words of the Apostle to my readers, "My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord."

By this time I hope we are all resolved within ourselves to follow our Saviour's counsel and advice, even to "strive to enter in at the strait gate," and "to walk in that narrow way that leads to life." If we be not, we have just cause to suspect ourselves to be in the "gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity;" but if we be resolved in good earnest, we cannot but be very solicitous to know what we must do in order to it, or how every one of us may "enter in at the strait gate," so as to be happy for ever? A question of the highest importance imaginable; so that it is absolutely necessary for every soul amongst us to be thoroughly resolved in it, for it concerns our life, our immortal and eternal life; and therefore I shall endeavour to resolve it in as few and perspicuous terms as possibly I can, that the meanest capa-

city may understand it. But I must take leave to say beforehand, that our knowing of it will signify nothing unless we practise it, neither will you be ever the nearer Heaven, because you know the way to it unless you also walk in it.

1. And therefore the first thing that I shall propound, in order to our eternal Salvation, is, that we should resolve immediately in the presence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, study, and business in this world, to “seek the Kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof,” in the first place, according to our Saviour’s advice and command, that we would not halt any longer between two opinions, and think to seek Heaven and earth together, things diametrically opposite to one another. If we really think earth to be better than Heaven, what need we trouble ourselves any further, than to heap up the riches, and to enjoy the pleasures of this world? But if we really think Heaven to be better than earth, as all wise men must needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not ourselves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold with the one, and despise the other: ye cannot serve God and Mammon,” that is, in plain English, we cannot mind Heaven and earth both together; for we can have but one grand and principal design in the world; and therefore, if our principal design be to get wealth or any earthly enjoyment, we deceive ourselves, if we think that we mind Heaven at all. For that we can never properly be said to do, until we mind it before all things whatsoever in the world besides; and let us not say, or think within ourselves, that “this is a hard saying,” [John 6. 60.] for we may assure ourselves it is no more than what we shall all find to be really true; and that never a soul of us shall ever know what Heaven is, that doth not first prefer it before all things here below, and, by consequence, make it his principal, if not only design to get thither. Matt. 6. 33. ver. 24.

2. Supposing us, therefore, to be thus resolved within ourselves, my next advice is, that we break off our former sins by repentance, and shewing mercy to the poor; and that for the future we live not in the wilful commission of any

known sin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known duty. Where it is evident I advise to no more than what all men know themselves to be obliged to do ; for I dare say, there is none of us know so little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we ourselves know to be sin, and do what we know to be our duty, and though our knowledge may not be so great as others', yet our piety may be greater and our condition better. But we must still remember, that one sin will keep us out of Heaven as well as twenty ; and therefore, if we ever desire to come thither, we must not only do some or many things, but all things, whatsoever is required of us, to the best of our knowledge. I speak not this of myself, but Christ Himself hath told us the same

Matt. 19. 16, before, even that we must keep the Commandments, all the
17. Commandments, if we desire to enter into eternal life. Not as if it was indispensably necessary to observe every punctilio and circumstance of the Moral Law, for then no man could be saved ; but that it must be both our steadfast resolution and our chief study and endeavour to avoid whatsoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatsoever we know to be commanded by God.

And though by this we shall make a fair progress in the narrow way to life, yet there is still another step behind, before we can enter in at the strait gate, and that is, to believe in Jesus Christ, as our Saviour Himself hath taught us. The sum of which duty in brief is this, that when we have done all we can in obedience to the Moral Law, yet we must still look upon ourselves as unprofitable servants, and not expect to be justified or saved by virtue of that obedience, but only by the merits of Christ's death and passion ; humbly confiding that, in and through Him, the defects of our obedience shall be remitted, our persons accepted, our natures cleansed, and our souls eternally saved. This is not

ver. 21. only the principal, but the only thing which Paul and Silas

Acts 16. 31. directed the keeper of the prison to, in order to his Salvation, as comprehending all the rest under it, or at least supposing them.

Thus, therefore, though obedience be the way, faith is the gate through which we must enter into life. But seeing the

gate is strait as well as the way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Christ as to observe the Law, we must not think to do either by our own strength, but still implore the aid and assistance of Almighty God, and depend upon Him for it. For Christ Himself saith, "No man can come to Me, except John 6. 44. the Father Which hath sent Me draw him." But we can never expect that He should draw us unless we desire it of Him; and therefore it must be our daily prayer and petition at the Throne of Grace, that God would vouchsafe us His especial grace and assistance, without which I cannot see how any one that knows his own heart can expect to be saved. But our comfort is, if we do what we can, God will hear our prayers, and enable us to do what otherwise we cannot; for He never yet did, nor ever will fail any man that sincerely endeavours to serve and honour Him.

3. Lastly, Although we are to trust in God for the answer of our prayers in this particular, yet we must not expect that He should do it immediately from Himself, but we must use those means which Himself hath appointed whereby to work faith, and by consequence all other graces in us. Now the Scriptures tell us that faith comes by hearing. Rom. 10. 17. Wherefore, if we desire to believe so as to be saved, we must wait upon God in His public Ordinances, and there expect such influences of His grace and Spirit whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow way, and enter in at the strait gate that leads to life.

Thus I have shewn you in few terms how to do the great work which you came into the world about, even how to get to Heaven. For howsoever hard it is to come thither, let us but resolve, as we have seen, to mind it before all things else, fear God and keep His Commandments to the utmost of our power, believe in Christ for the pardon of our sins, and the acceptance both of our persons and performances; pray sincerely unto God, and wait diligently upon Him for the assistance of His grace, to do what He requires from us; — let us do this, and we need not fear but our souls shall live. If we leave this undone, we ourselves shall be undone for ever. And, therefore, let me advise all to dally no longer in a matter of such consequence as this is, but now we know the way to Heaven, to turn immediately into it, and walk

constantly in it. Though the way be narrow, it is not long ; and though the gate be strait, it opens into eternal life. And therefore, to conclude, let us remember we have now been told how to get to Heaven ; it is not in my power to force men thither, whether they will or no ; I can only shew them the way. It is their interest as well as duty to walk in it ; which if they do, I dare assure them, in the Name of Christ, it is not long, but they will be admitted into the choir of Heaven, to sing hallelujahs for evermore.

VII. THOUGHTS UPON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

IF we seriously consider with ourselves that wonder of all wonders, that mystery of all mysteries, the incarnation of the Son of God, it may justly strike us into astonishment, and an admiration what should be the reason and the end of it ; why the great and glorious, the almighty and eternal God, should take our weak and finite nature into His infinite and incomprehensible Person ?—why the Creator of all things should Himself become a creature ?—and He that made the world be Himself made into it ?—why the Supreme Being of all beings, that gives essence and existence to all things in the world, Whose glory the Heaven of heavens is not able to contain, should clothe Himself with flesh and become man, of the self-same nature and substance with us, who live, and move, and have our being in Him ? Certainly, it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the Most High God manifested Himself to the sons of men in so wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But He did it, questionless, upon some design that was as great and glorious as the act itself. And if we would know what His end and design in coming into the world was, the Scriptures assure us, in general, that it was for the Salvation of mankind whose nature He assumed. For “ this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And He Himself tells us, John 3. 16. “ That God so loved the world, that He sent His Only-

¹Tim. 1. 15.

John 3. 16.

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now for the accomplishment of this no less glorious than gracious design, there are two things which it was necessary He should do for us, whilst He was upon earth, even expiate our former sins, and direct us unto holiness for the future; both which He hath effected for us: the one by His death, and the other by His life.

For, by His death, He hath paid that debt which we owed to God, having made complete satisfaction to God's justice for those sins whereby we have incurred His displeasure: for death was threatened to all mankind in case of disobedience, and by consequence all mankind, being disobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it stand with the justice of God to falsify His Word; nor yet with His glory, to put up the injuries that we have committed against Him, without having satisfaction made unto Him for them. But, it being impossible that a finite creature should satisfy for those sins, which were committed against the infinite God, hence the infinite God Himself was pleased to undertake it for us, even to satisfy Himself for those sins which were committed against Him; which He did by undergoing that death which He had threatened to us in our own nature, united to the Person of His Own and only Son, God co-equal, co-essential, co-eternal with Himself, Who is therefore said, to be "a propitiation for our sins." Neither can there any ^{1 John 2. 2.} reason imaginable be alleged, why the Son of God Himself should suffer death, unless it was upon our account, and in our stead, whose nature He assumed, and in which He suffered it. But not to insist upon that now: the human nature, in general, having thus suffered that death in the Person of the Son of God, which all mankind were otherwise bound to have undergone in their own persons; hence it comes to pass, that we are all in a capacity of avoiding that death which we have deserved by our sins, if we do but rightly believe in Christ, and apply His sufferings to ourselves.

And as Christ by His death and passion hath thus satisfied for our sins, so hath He by His life and actions given us an exact pattern of true piety and virtue. And although I

cannot say it was the only, yet questionless one great end wherefore He continued so long on earth, and conversed so much amongst men, and that so many of His actions are delivered to us with so many circumstances as they are, was, that we, by His example, might learn how to carry and behave ourselves in this lower world. For as from that time to this, so from the beginning of the world to that time, there had been never a man upon the face of the earth, that had lived so conformably to the Law of God, that it was safe or lawful for another to follow Him in all things. For all flesh was corrupt, and the very best of men were still but men, subject to failures in their lives, as well as to errors in their judgments; yea, those very persons whom the Scriptures record, and God Himself attesteth to have been eminent in their generation for piety and justice, did oftentimes fail in both. Noah is asserted by God Himself to have been righteous in his generation, Abraham to be the Father of the faithful, Moses to be the meekest man upon earth, David to be a man after God's Own heart, Solomon to have been the wisest man that ever lived, and Job to be a "perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil:" yet none of these most excellent persons but had their vices as well as virtues: and it is observable, that the more eminent any were for piety, the more notorious sins God hath sometimes suffered them to slip into, to keep them humble. So that from the first to the second Adam, there never lived a man of whom it could be said, 'This man never sinned, never transgressed the laws of God, and therefore may in all things be imitated by men.'

[Gen. 6. 9;
7. 1; Gal. 3. 7;
Num. 12. 3;
1 Sam. 13.
14; 1 Kings
4. 31; Job
1. 1.]

But now as the first was made, the second Adam continued all along most pure and perfect, both in thought, word, and action: for "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Never so much as a vain thought ever sprang up in His most holy heart, not so much as an idle word ever proceeded out of His Divine lips, nor so much as an impertinent or frivolous action was ever performed by His sacred and most righteous hands; His whole life being nothing else but one continued act of piety towards God, justice towards men, love and charity towards all. And as Himself lived, so would He have all His dis-

1 Pet. 2. 22.

ciples live whilst they are here below ; and therefore enjoins them that go after Him, not only to deny themselves, and take up their crosses, but also to follow or imitate Him to the utmost of their power in their life and actions. So that He now expects that all those who profess themselves to be His disciples, do first deny themselves whatsoever is offensive unto Him ; and then take up their cross so as to be ready and willing to do or suffer any thing for Him that hath done and suffered so much as He hath for us. And then, lastly, that they write after the copy that He hath set them, and walk in the steps wherein He hath gone before them ; even that they follow Him through all duties and difficulties whatsoever, so as still to do unto the utmost of their power as He did, otherwise they in vain pretend to be His disciples. “ For he that saith he abideth in Him, ought ^{1 John 2. 6.} himself also to walk even as He walked,” that is, he that professeth to believe in Jesus Christ should live as He lived while He was upon earth. Hence St. Paul, a true disciple of Christ, saith, “ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am ^{1 Cor. 11. 1.} of Christ.” As he followed Christ, he would have others to follow him ; but he would have them follow him no farther than as he followed Christ.

It is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Christ’s being so or no, the law of God first obliging us to be so ; but howsoever, we have now an additional obligation upon us to be holy, “ as He Who hath called us was holy in all manner of ^{1 Pet. 1. 15.} conversation.” For the Scripture tells us expressly, that Christ “ hath left us an example, that we should follow His ^{ch. 2. 21.} steps ;” and our Saviour Himself commands all that come ^{Matt. 11. 29,} to Him to learn of Him. And therefore we can never expect ^{30.} that He should own us for His disciples, unless we own Him for our Lord and Master, so far as to obey and follow Him ; He having commanded all those that come to Him, to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow Him. And seeing we all, I hope, desire to be Christians indeed, as I have explained the two former of these duties, I shall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter too, that we may all so follow Christ here as to come to Him hereafter.

Now for the opening of this, we must know that we neither can nor ought to follow Christ in every thing He did when He was here below; for even whilst He was here below, He was still the Most High and Mighty God, the same that He had been from eternity, and often manifested His power and glory to the sons of men whilst He was conversing with them in their own nature, wherein it would be horrid presumption for us to pretend to follow Him. As, for example, "He knew the" very "thoughts of men," which I suppose is something past our skill to do. Hence also He judged and censured others; "Woe unto you," saith He, "Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye are like unto painted sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." But this we could not do though we might, not being able to search into others' hearts; neither may we do it though we could, Christ Himself having expressly commanded the contrary, saying, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Our Saviour also, as God, foretold future events, and wrought miracles, such as were clear demonstrations of His infinite power and Godhead; but in this He is to be believed and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus, also, when He sent His disciples to loose another man's colt, and bring him away, that He did as Lord and Sovereign of the world, or as the Supreme Possessor and Universal Proprietor of all things; as when He commanded the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians, and carry away their jewels and raiment; for, all things being His, He may give them to whom He pleaseth; and though it would have been a sin to have taken them away without His command, yet His command gave them a property in them, a right and title to them, and they had sinned unless they had obeyed the command. So here our Saviour sent for the colt, as if it had been His Own, for so really it was, as He is God, which He manifested Himself to be at the same time, in that He inclined the heart of the civil owner thereof to let him go, only upon the Disciples saying, that "the Lord had need of him." But this He did not for our example, but to shew forth His Own power and glory.

Matt. 12. 25.

ch. 23. 27,
28.

ch. 7. 1.

Luke 21. 6.

ch. 19. 30.

[Exod. 11.
2; 12. 36.]Luke 19. 33,
34.

There are some things also which our blessed Saviour did as God-man, or as the Mediator betwixt God and man, as His making atonement and satisfaction for the sins of mankind, His instituting Offices, and Ordinances, and Sacraments in His Church, and the like; which having an immediate respect to His office of Mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate Him in such things. But the things which He would have us to follow Him in, are such and such only as He did as mere man, that had no immediate dependence upon or reference to either His Godhead or Mediatorship. For He having honoured our nature so far as to take it into His Own Divine Person, so as to become really and truly man; as so, He did whatsoever man is bound to do, both as to God Himself, and likewise as to man; and being absolutely perfect in all the faculties of His soul and members of His body, He infinitely surpassed all other men both in Divine graces and moral virtues; so that as He never committed any one sin, so neither did He ever neglect any one duty which as man He was bound to perform either to God or men, but still observed every punctilio and circumstance of the Moral Law; by which means He hath left us a complete pattern of truth and universal holiness, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

Hoping, therefore, that all who profess themselves to be the friends and disciples of Jesus Christ desire to manifest themselves to be so, by following both His precepts and example, I shall give the reader a short narrative of His life and actions, wherein we may all see what true piety is, and what real Christianity requires of us: and may not content ourselves as many do, with being professors, and adhering to parties or factions amongst us, but strive to be thorough Christians, and to carry ourselves as such, by walking as Christ Himself walked; which that we may at least know how to do, looking upon Christ as a mere man, I shall shew how He did, and by consequence how we ought to carry ourselves both to God and man, and what graces and virtues He exercised all along for our example and imitation.

I. Now, for our more clear and methodical proceeding

in a matter of such consequence as this is, I shall begin with His behaviour towards men, from His childhood to His death.

1. *First*, Therefore, when He was a child of twelve years of age, it is particularly recorded of Him, that He was subject or obedient to His parents, his real mother and reputed father. It is true, He knew at that time that God Himself was His Father, for, said He, “ Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” And knowing God to be His Father, He could not but know likewise that He was infinitely above His mother; yea, that she could never have borne Him, had not He Himself first made and supported her. Yet, howsoever, though as God He was Father to her, yet as man she was mother to Him, and therefore He honoured and obeyed both her and him to whom she was espoused. Neither did He only respect His mother whilst He was here, but He took care of her too when He was going hence. Yea, all the pains He suffered upon the cross could not make Him forget His duty to her that bore Him; but seeing her standing by the cross, as Himself hung on it, He committed her to the care of His beloved Disciple, who
 Luke. 2. 51. ver. 49. “ took her to his own home.”
 John 19. 27. Now, as our Saviour did, so are we bound to carry ourselves to our earthly parents, whatsoever their temper or condition be in this world. Though God hath blessed some of us, perhaps, with greater estates than ever He blessed them, yet we must not think ourselves above them, nor be at all the less respectful to them. Christ, we see, was infinitely above His mother, yet, as she was His mother, He was both subject and respectful to her. He was not ashamed to own her as she stood by the cross, but, in the view and hearing of all there present, gave His Disciple a charge to take care of her; leaving us an example, that such amongst us as have parents, provide for them if they need it, as well as for our children, both while we live, and when we come to die.

2. And as He was to His natural, so was He too to His civil parents, the magistrates under which He lived, submissive and faithful: for though, as He was God, He was infinitely above them in Heaven, yet, as He was man, He

was below them on earth, having committed all civil power into their hands, without reserving any at all for Himself. So that though they received their commission from Him, yet now Himself could not act without receiving a commission from them. And therefore, having no commission from them to do it, He would not entrench so much upon their privilege and power, as to determine the controversy betwixt the two brethren contending about their inheritance; "Man," saith He, "who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" And to shew His submission to the civil magistrate, as highly as possibly He could, rather than offend them, He wrought a miracle to pay the tax which they had charged upon Him. And when the officers were sent to take Him, though He had more than twelve legions of angels at His service to have fought for Him if He had pleased, yet He would not employ them, nor suffer His Own Disciples to make any resistance. And though some of late days, who call themselves Christians, have acted quite contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular, I hope better things of my readers, even that they will behave themselves more like to Christ, Who, though He was the Supreme Governor of the world, yet would not resist, but submitted to the civil power, which Himself had intrusted men withal. Luke 12. 14.
Matt. 17. 27.
ch. 26. 52, 53.

3. Moreover, although whilst He was here He was really not only the best but greatest man upon earth, yet He carried Himself to others with that meekness, humility, and respect, as if He had been the least; as He never admired any man for his riches, so neither did He despise any man for his poverty; poor men and rich were all alike to Him. He was as lowly and respectful to the lowest, as He was to the highest that He conversed with: He affected no titles of honour, nor gaped after popular air; but submitted Himself to the meanest services that He could, for the good of others, even to the washing His Own Disciples' feet; and all to teach us that we can never think too lowly of ourselves, nor do any thing that is beneath us; propounding Himself as our example, especially in this particular, "Learn of Me," saith He, "for I am meek and lowly in heart." ch. 11. 29.

His humility also was the more remarkable, in that His bounty and goodness to others were so great, for He went

Acts 10. 38. about doing good. Wheresoever you read He was, you still read of some good work or other which He did there. Whatsoever company He conversed with, they still went better from Him than they came unto Him, if they came out of a good end. By Him, as Himself said, "the blind received their sight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, and the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the Gospel preached unto them." Yea, it is observable, that we never read of any person whatsoever that came unto Him desiring any real kindness or favour of Him, but he still received it, and that whether he was friend or foe. For, indeed, though He had many inveterate and implacable enemies in the world, yet He bore no grudge or malice against them, but expressed as much love and favour to them as to His greatest friends. Insomuch, that when they had gotten Him upon the cross, and fastened His hands and feet unto it, in the midst of all that pain and torment which they put Him to, He still prayed for them.

Luke 23. 34.

Oh! how happy, how blessed a people should we be, could we but follow our blessed Saviour in this particular! How well would it be with us, could we but be thus loving to one another, as Christ was to all, even His most bitter enemies! We may assure ourselves it is not only our misery but our sin too, unless we be so. And our sin will be the greater, now we know our Master's pleasure, unless we do it. And therefore let all such amongst us as desire to carry ourselves as Christ Himself did, and as becometh His disciples in the world, begin here.

Be submissive and obedient both to our parents and governors, humble in our own sight, despise none, but be charitable, loving and good to all: by this shall all men know that we are Christ's disciples indeed.

4. Having thus seen our Saviour's carriage towards men, we shall now consider His piety and devotion towards God: not as if it was possible for me to express the excellency and perfection of those religious acts which He performed continually within His soul to God, every one of His faculties being as entire in itself, and as perfect in its acts, as it was first made or designed to be. There was no darkness, nor so much as gloominess in His mind, no error or mistake in

His judgment, no bribery or corruption in His conscience, no obstinacy or perverseness in His will, no irregularity or disorder in His affections, no spot, no blot, no blemish, not the least imperfection or infirmity, in His whole soul. And therefore even whilst His body was on earth, His head and heart were still in Heaven. For He never troubled His head, nor so much as concerned Himself, about any thing here below, any farther than to do all the good He could, His thoughts being wholly taken up with considering how to advance God's glory and man's eternal happiness. And as for His heart, that was the altar on which the sacred fire of Divine love was always burning, the flames whereof continually ascended up to Heaven, being accompanied with the most ardent and fervent desires of, and delight in, the chiefest good.

II. But it must not be expected that I should give an exact description of that eminent and most perfect holiness which our blessed Saviour was inwardly adorned with, and continually employed in; which I am as unable to express as desirous to imitate. But, howsoever, I shall endeavour to mind the reader, in general, of such acts of piety and devotion, which are particularly recorded, on purpose for our imitation.

1. Therefore, it is observed of our Saviour, that "from Luke 2. 52. a child He increased in wisdom, as He did in stature." Where by wisdom we are to understand the knowledge of God and of Divine things. For our Saviour having taken our nature into His person, with all its frailties and infirmities, as it is a created being, He did not in that nature presently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, He then knew all things as well as He had from all eternity: but we are now speaking of Him as a man, like one of us in all things, except sin. But we continue some considerable time after we are born before we know any thing, or come to the use of our reason; the rational soul not being able to exert or manifest itself until the natural phlegm and radical moisture of the body, which in infants is predominant, be so digested that the body be rightly qualified, and its organs fitted for the soul to work upon

and to make use of. And though our Saviour questionless came to the use of His reason, as man, far sooner than we are wont to do, yet we must not think that He knew all things as soon as He was born; for that the nature He assumed was not capable of; neither could He then be said, as He is, to increase in wisdom, for where there is a perfection there can be no increase.

But here, before we proceed further, it will be necessary to answer an objection which some may make against this. For, if our Saviour as man knew not all things, then He was not perfect, nor absolutely free from sin, ignorance itself being a sin. To this I have these things to answer:

(1.) *First*, It is no sin for a creature to be ignorant of some things, because it is impossible for a creature to know all things; for to be omniscient is God's prerogative, neither is a creature capable of it, because he is but finite, whereas the knowledge of all things, or omniscience, is itself an infinite act, and therefore to be performed only by an infinite being. Hence it is that no creature in the world ever was or ever could be made omniscient; but there are many things which Adam in his integrity, and the very Angels themselves, are ignorant of; as our Saviour, speaking of the Day of Judgment, saith, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." But the Angels are nevertheless perfect, because they know not this. Nay, it is observable that the Son Himself, as man, knew it not; "neither," saith He, "the Son, but the Father:" and if He knew it not then, much less was it necessary for Him to know it when a child.

Mark 13. 32.

[1 John 3.
4.]

(2.) *Secondly*, As to be ignorant of some things is no sin, so neither is any ignorance at all sin, but that whereby a man is ignorant of what he is bound to know: "For all sin is the transgression of the Law." And therefore, if there be no law obliging me to know such or such things, I do not sin by being ignorant of them, for I transgress no law. Now, though all men are bound by the Law of God to know Him, and their duty to Him, yet infants, so long as infants, are not, neither can be, obnoxious or subject to that

law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea, impossibility to perform it; but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged questionless to know Him first from Whom they receive their knowledge.

And thus it was that our blessed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the Law of God, in that although He might still continue ignorant of many things, yet howsoever He all along knew all that He was bound to know, and as He grew by degrees more and more capable of knowing any thing, so did He increase still more in true wisdom, or in the knowledge of God: so that by that time He was twelve years old, He was able to dispute with the great doctors and learned rabbies among the Jews; and after that, as He grew in stature, so did He grow in wisdom too, and in favour both with God and man. And verily, although we did not follow our blessed Saviour in this particular when we were children, we ought howsoever to endeavour it now we are men and women, even to grow in wisdom, and every day add something to our spiritual stature, so as to let never a day pass over our heads without being better acquainted with God's goodness to us, or our duty to Him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in wisdom when a child, we should also learn to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and not to strive so much to make them rich, as to use all means to make them wise and good, that they may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wisdom and in stature, and in the favour both of God and man.

2. And as our Saviour grew in wisdom when a child, so did He use and manifest it when He came to be a man, by devoting Himself wholly unto the service of the living God, and to the exercise of all true grace and virtue; wherein His blessed soul was so much taken up, that He had neither time nor heart to mind those toys and trifles which silly mortals upon earth are so much apt to dote on. It is true, all the world was His, but He had given it all away to others, not reserving for Himself so much as a house to put His head Matt. 8. 20. in. And what money He had hoarded up, you may gather from His working a miracle to pay His tribute or poll-money, which came not to much above a shilling. Indeed, He came into the world and went out again, without ever

taking any notice of any pleasures, honours, or riches in it, as if there had been no such thing here, as really there was not, nor ever will be; all the pomp and glory of this deceitful world having no other being or existence, but only in our distempered fancies and imaginations; and therefore our Saviour, Whose fancy was sound, and His imagination untainted, looked upon all the world and the glory of it as not worthy to be looked upon, seeing nothing in it wherefore it should be desired. And therefore, instead of spending His time in the childish pursuit of clouds and shadows, He made the service of God not only His business but His recreation too, His food as well as work. “It is My meat,” saith He, “to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” This was all the riches, honours, and pleasures, which He sought for in the world, even to do the will of Him that sent Him hither, and to finish the work which He came about; and so He did before He went away: “Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.” If therefore we would be Christ’s disciples, so as to follow Him, we see what we must do, and how we must behave and carry ourselves whilst we are here below; we must not spend our time, nor throw away our precious and short-lived days upon the trifles and impertinences of this transient world, as if we came hither for nothing else but to rake and scrape up a little dust and dirt together, or to wallow ourselves like swine in the mire of carnal pleasures and delights. No, we may assure ourselves we have greater things to do, and far more noble designs to carry on whilst we continue in this vale of tears, even to “work out our Salvation with fear and trembling,” and to “make our calling and election sure,” and to serve God here, so as to enjoy Him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we must not only do, but do it too with pleasure and delight, and never leave until we have accomplished it; we must make it our only pleasure to please God, account it our only honour to honour Him, and esteem His love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy; we must think ourselves no further happy, than we find ourselves to be truly holy, and therefore devote our lives wholly to Him, in Whom we live.

John 4. 34.

ch. 17. 4.

[Phil. 2. 12.]

[2 Pet. 1. 10.]

This is to live as Christ lived, and by consequence as Christians ought to do.

I might here instance in several other acts of piety and devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exercised Himself in; as His humble and perfect submission and resignation of His Own will to God's, His most ardent love unto Him, and zeal for Him, as also His firm and steadfast trust and confidence in Him; so that nothing could ever disquiet or discompose His mind, but still His heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. In all which it is both our duty and interest to follow Him; our happiness as well as holiness consisting in our dependence upon God and inclinations to Him.

3. But we should do well to observe withal, that our Saviour performed external as well as inward worship and devotion unto God; particularly we often find Him praising God and praying unto Him; and that with His eyes lift up to Heaven in a most humble and reverential posture; yea, when He was to choose and ordain some of His disciples to the work of the ministry, and to succeed Him after His departure under the name of Apostles, He spent the night before in prayer to God. I confess the words there used, *ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, John 17. 1; Luke 22. 41; Matt. 26. 39. will scarce admit of that interpretation or exposition, signifying rather, in a strict sense, that he went into a place appointed for prayer, which was usually called *προσευχή*, 'a place of prayer,' which kind of places were very frequent in Judea, and some of them continued till Epiphanius's time, as himself asserts; and they were only plots of ground enclosed with a wall, and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always, upon mountains, whither the Jews used to resort, to pray together, in great multitudes. And this seems to be the proper meaning of these words, where our Saviour is said to go into a mountain, and to continue all night *ἐν τῇ προσευχῇ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, 'in one of these *proseuches* of God,' a place dedicated to His service. Yet, howsoever, we cannot suppose but that He went thither to do what the place whither He went was designed for, even to pray; and by consequence, that seeing He staid there all night, questionless He spent the whole night in prayer and

John 17. 1;
Luke 22. 41;
Matt. 26. 39.

Luke 6. 12.

[Adv. Hæ-
res. lxxx.
lib. iii. tom.
2.]

meditation, in order to so great a work as the ordaining His Apostles was.

Here, therefore, is another copy which our Master Christ hath set us to write after ; a lesson that all must learn and practise that would be His disciples. Though we ordinarily converse with nothing but dirt and clay, and with our fellow-worms on earth ; yet as Christ did, so should we often retire from the tumults and bustles of the world to converse with Him that made us ; both to praise Him for the mercies we have received, and to pray unto Him for what we want ; only we shall do well to have a care that we do not perform so solemn a duty as this is after a careless and perfunctory manner, because none sees us but God ; for His seeing us is infinitely more than if all the world besides should see us ; and we must still remember that prayer is the greatest work that a creature can be engaged in, and therefore to be performed with the greatest seriousness, reverence, and earnestness, that possibly we can raise up our spirits to. And besides our daily devotions which we owe and ought to pay to God, whensoever we set upon any great and weighty business, we must be sure to follow our Saviour's steps in setting some time apart proportionably to the business we undertake, wherein to ask God's counsel, and desire His direction and blessing in the most serious and solemn manner that possibly we can. I need not tell the reader what benefit we shall receive by this means ; none of us that shall try it but will soon find it by experience.

I shall observe only one thing more concerning our Saviour's devotion, and that is, that although He took all occasions to instruct and admonish His Disciples and followers, whether in the fields, or upon the mountains, or in private houses, even wheresoever He could find an opportunity to do it ; yet upon Sabbath-days He always frequented the public worship of God ; He went into the synagogues, places appointed for public prayers and reading and hearing of the Word, a thing which I fear many amongst us do not think of, or, at least, not rightly consider it ; for if they did, they would not dare, methinks, to walk so directly contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular ; for St. Luke tells

us, that "when He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day." From whence none of us but may easily observe that our Saviour did not go into a synagogue or church, by the by, to see what they were doing there, neither did He happen to go in by chance upon the Sabbath-day, but it was His custom and constant practice to do so, even to go each Sabbath-day to the public Ordinances, there to join with the congregation in performing their public service and devotions to Almighty God.

And here I must take leave to say, that was there no other law, nor any other obligations upon us (as there be many) to frequent the public worship of God, this practice and example of our blessed Saviour doth sufficiently and effectually oblige us all to a constant attendance upon the public Ordinances. For as we are Christians, and profess ourselves to be His disciples, we are all bound to follow Him, He commands us here and elsewhere to do it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be obliged to follow Him in more than in the manner of His worshipping God. And therefore whosoever, out of any humour, fancy, or slothfulness, shall presume to neglect the public worship of God, he doth not only act contrary to Christ's example, but transgresses also His command, that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this will have to answer for themselves when they come to stand before Christ's tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all those who profess themselves to be Christians should follow Christ in all things that they can, and, by consequence, in this particular; and that they sin who do not.

But in whatsoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's steps, that we are usually present at the public worship of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow Him in; but that as we follow Him to the public Ordinances, so we do likewise in our private devotions, yea, and in our behaviour both to God and man; which that we may the better do, I have endeavoured to shew wherein especially we ought to follow Christ, in being obedient to our parents, subject to our governors, lowly to the lowest, loving and charitable unto

all ; as also in growing in wisdom and the knowledge of God, in contemning the world, in devoting ourselves wholly to the service of God, in resigning our wills to His, in loving of Him, in trusting on Him above all things else, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting His public ordinances ; to which I may also add, in denying ourselves, and taking up our crosses, which He Himself hath done before us, as well as required of us.

What now remains, but that, seeing the steps wherein our Saviour walked, we should all resolve to walk together in them. And I hope that I need not use arguments to persuade any to it ; it is enough, one would think, that Christ Himself, Whose Name we bear, expects and commands it from us, and in that the sum of all our religion consisteth in obeying and following Christ ; the circumstances of Whose life are recorded on purpose that we may imitate Him unto the utmost of our power, not only in the matter but manner of our actions, even in the circumstances as well as in the substance of them.

But this I dare say we all both know and believe, even that it is our duty to follow Christ ; and therefore it is a sad, a dismal thing to consider, that among them that know it there are so few that do it ; but even those that go under the name of Christians themselves, do more generally follow the beasts of the field, or the very fiends of Hell, rather than Christ our Saviour. For all covetous worldlings that look no higher than earth, and all luxurious epicures that labour after no other but sensual pleasures, whom do they imitate but the beasts that perish ? And as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malicious seducers of their brethren and oppressors of their neighbours, all backbiters and false accusers, all deriders of religion and apostates from it, they are all of their father the Devil, and his works they do. And if all such persons should be taken from amongst us, how few would be left behind that follow Christ ! Very few indeed ! but I hope there would be some. And oh that all who read this would be in the number of them, even that they would all from this day forward resolve to come as near our blessed Saviour in all their actions both to God and man as possibly they can ; which if we once did, what

holy, what happy lives should we then lead ! How should we antedate both the work and joys of Heaven ! And how certain should we be to be there ere long, where Christ, that is the Pattern of our lives here, will be the Portion of our souls for ever !

Thus I have shewn what Christ requires of those who would be His disciples, enjoining them to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him. And now I have done my duty in explaining these words, it is all my readers' as well as mine to practise them, which I heartily wish we would all resolve to do ; and I must say it highly concerns us all to do so, for we can never be saved but by Christ, nor by Him, unless we be His disciples ; neither can we be His disciples, unless we do what is here required of us. And therefore, if we care not whether we be saved or no, we may think no more of these things, nor trouble our heads about them ; but if we really desire to come to Heaven, let us remember, He Who alone can bring us thither hath told us, that we must "deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Him." [Matt. 16. 24.]

VIII. THOUGHTS UPON OUR CALL AND ELECTION.

"MANY are called," saith our Saviour, "but few chosen." Matt. 22. 14. O dreadful sentence, who is able to hear it without trembling and astonishment ! If He had said, that of all the men that are born into the world there are but few saved, this would not have struck such a fear and horror into us ; for we might still hope, that though Turks, Jews, and Heathens, which are far the greatest part of the world, should all perish, yet we few, in comparison of them, who are baptized into His Name, who profess His Gospel, who enjoy His Ordinances, who are admitted to His Sacraments, that all we who are called to Him might be chosen and saved by Him : but that of those very persons who are called, there are but few chosen — what a sharp and terrible sentence is this ! Who can bear it ? Especially considering by Whom it was

pronounced, even by Christ Himself. If a mere man had spoken it, we might hope it was but a human error; if an Angel had uttered it, we might think it possible he might be mistaken; but that Christ Himself, the eternal Son of God, Who is truth and infallibility itself, that He should assert it, that He Who laid down His life to redeem ours, that He Who came into the world on purpose to call and save us, that He in Whom alone it is possible for us to be chosen to Salvation, that He should say, "Many are called, but few chosen;" this is a hard saying indeed, which may justly make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble, at the hearing of it. And yet we see our Saviour here expressly saith it, and not only here neither, but again, Matt. xx. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing He would have us often think of, and a matter of more than ordinary importance, in that He did not think it enough to tell us of it once, but He repeated it in the same words again, that we might be sure to remember it, and take especial notice of it, that "many are called, but few chosen."

In which words, that we may understand our Saviour's meaning aright, we must first consider the occasion of them in this place, which in brief was this. Our Saviour, according to the custom that obtained in those days amongst the wise men of the East, delighting to use parables, thereby to represent His Heavenly doctrine more clearly to the understanding of His hearers, in this chapter compares the "kingdom of God to a certain king that made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding." Where, by the king, He means the eternal God, the universal Monarch of the world, Who intending to make a marriage betwixt His Son and the Church, styled the spouse of Christ, He first sent to His guests before bidden, even the Jews, the seed of Abraham His friend, and at that time His peculiar people. But they not hearkening to the first invitation, He sends to them again. Yet they still made light of it, having, it seems, as we most have, other business to mind, and therefore went their way, some to their farms, others to their merchandise. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reason why men accept not of the overtures of grace made unto them in the Gospel,

Matt. 20. 2,
3.

ver. 4.

ver. 5.

is, because their minds are taken up with the cares of this world, looking upon their farms, their trades, and merchandise, as things of greater moment than Heaven and eternal glory. Yea, some of them took the servants which were sent to invite them, "and treated them spitefully, and slew Matt. 20. 6. them." Why, what is the matter? What injury have the servants, the Prophets, the Apostles, or the ministers of Christ, done them? What! do they come to oppress them, to take their estates from them? to disgrace or bring them into bondage? No, they only come to invite them to a marriage-feast, to tender them the highest comforts and refreshments imaginable both for their souls and bodies. And is this all the recompense they give them for their kindness,—not only to refuse it, but to abuse them that bring it? Well might this glorious king be angry and incensed at such an affront offered him as this was, and therefore "he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those ver. 7. murderers, and burnt up their city," as we all know He did to the murdering Jews, who soon after this were destroyed, and their royal city Jerusalem burnt. But now the feast is prepared, shall there be none to eat it? Yes, for seeing they who were first bidden were not worthy to partake of his dainties, he orders his servants to go into the highways, ver. 6, 9. and bid as many as they could find to the marriage. The Jews having refused the Gospel, God sends to invite the Gentiles to it, who hitherto had been reckoned aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, "strangers to the covenant of pro- Eph. 2. 12. mise, having no hope, and without God in the world." But now they also are bidden to the wedding, they are called to Christ, and invited to partake of all the privileges of the Gospel. For the servants, having received the command, Matt. 20. 10. "went out into the highway," even into all the by-places and corners of the world; "and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests." But amongst these, too, when ver. 11. the king came to see his guests, he saw one that had not on a wedding-garment. Under which one are represented all of the same kind who have not on their wedding-garment, that is, who walk not worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, not being clothed with humility, faith, and other

Matt. 22. 12,
13.

graces suitable to a Christian. All which, notwithstanding they were invited, yea, and come in too upon their invitation, yet they are cast out again into outer darkness. And then He adds, "for many are called, but few chosen;" as if He should have said, 'The Jews were called, but would not come; the Gentiles are called, they come, but some of them are cast out again; so that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.' "For many are called, but few chosen." Which short but pithy saying of our blessed Saviour, that we may rightly understand, we shall first consider the former part of it, "Many are called," and then the latter, "but few chosen."

I. That we may apprehend the full meaning of the first part of this proposition, "Many are called," there are three things to be considered:

1. What is here meant by being called.
2. How men are called.
3. How it appears that "many are called."

1. As for the first, what we are here to understand by being called:—We must know that this is meant only of God's voice to mankind, making known His will and pleasure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly, and so inviting them to His service here, and to the enjoyment of His presence hereafter.

But to explain the nature of it more particularly, we must consider the "*terminus à quo*," and the "*terminus ad quod*," "what it is God calls us from, and what it is He calls us to," both which we shall speak to, jointly or together.

(1.) He calls us from darkness to light, from error and ignorance to truth and knowledge. As He made us rational and knowing creatures at first, so He would have us to be again, so as to understand and know Him that made us, and that gave us the power of understanding and knowing; and not employ the little knowledge we have, only about the affairs of our bodies, our trades, and callings in this world, nor yet in learning arts and sciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal souls, that we may know Him that is the true God, and Jesus Christ Whom He hath sent; without which, all our other knowledge will avail us nothing. We are still in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by consequence uncom-

fortable as well as dangerous estate, God of His infinite mercy is pleased to call us, that we "should shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light." 1 Pet. 2. 9.

(2.) God calls us from superstition and idolatry, to serve and worship Him. For we are called to turn "from idols to serve the living and true God." Thus He called Abraham out of Chaldea, and his posterity, the Israelites, out of Egypt, places of idolatry, that they might serve and worship Him, and Him alone. Thus He called our ancestors of this nation out of their heathenish superstitions to the knowledge and worship of Himself and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus He called upon us to "flee from idolatry;" not only from heathenish or popish, but from all idolatry whatsoever, and by consequence from covetousness, which God Himself tells us in plain terms is idolatry. And so indeed is our allowing ourselves in any known sin whatsoever; for we idolize it by setting it up in our hearts and affections, instead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and serve it, though not in our bodies, yet in our souls, which is the highest kind of idolatry which God calls us from. 1 Thess. 1. 9.
1 Cor. 10. 14.
Col. 3. 5.

(3.) Hence He also calls us from all manner of sin and profaneness to holiness and piety, both in our affections and actions. For, as the Apostle saith, "God hath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness." Where, by "uncleanness," He means all manner of lusts and corruptions which defile the soul, and make it unclean and impure in the sight of God. These God doth not call us to, but from: it is holiness and universal righteousness that He calls us to, and commands us to follow. This is the great thing that Christ in His Gospel calls for: "For the grace of God," which in His Gospel, "hath" now "appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." "He" now "commandeth all men every where to repent," and to turn to God. Hence He is said to have "called us with a holy calling." And "as He Who hath called us is holy," so ought we to be "holy in all manner of conversation." Thus, therefore, we all are called to be a holy people, a people zealous of good works, a people wholly devoted to 1 Thess. 4. 7.
Titus 2. 11, 12.
Acts 17. 30.
2 Tim. 1. 9.
1 Pet. 1. 15.

the service of the living God. In brief, we are called to be saints, a people consecrated unto God; and therefore, as every vessel in the Temple was holy, so we, being called to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, every thing in us should be holy: our thoughts should be holy, our affections holy, our words holy, our desires holy, every faculty of our souls, every member of our bodies, and every action of our lives, should be holy; every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us, should be holy, and all because our calling is holy; and we ought to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called."

Eph. 4. 1.

(4.) God calls us from carnal and temporal things to mind Heaven and eternal glory. He sees and observes how eager we are in prosecuting of this world's vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon such transitory and unsatisfying trifles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlasting peace; not to be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we "may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God." To set our "affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon the earth." To "seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" in the first place. Hence it is styled "a Heavenly calling," and "a high calling," because we are called by it to look after high and Heavenly things. He that made us hath so much kindness for us, that it pities Him to see us moil and toil, and spend our strength and labour, about such low and pitiful, such impertinent and unnecessary things, which Himself knows can never satisfy us; and therefore He calls and invites us to Himself, and to the enjoyment of His Own perfections, which are able to fill and satiate our immortal souls.

Rom. 12. 2.

Col. 3. 2.

Matt. 6. 33.

Heb. 3. 1 ;

Phil. 3. 14.

(5.) Hence, lastly, we are called from misery and danger to the state of happiness and felicity. As He called Lot out of Sodom, when fire and brimstone were ready to fall upon it, so He calls us from the world and sin, because otherwise wrath and fury will fall upon our heads. Or, as He called Noah into the ark, to preserve Him from the overflowing flood, so He calleth us into His service, and to the faith of His Son, that so we may escape that flood of misery which will suddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving

Gen. 19.
2.]

[ch. 7. 1.]

world. And therefore we must not think that He calls and invites us to Him because He stands in need of us, or wants our service; no, it is not because He cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without Him, nor in Him neither unless we come unto Him. This is the only reason why He calls us so earnestly to Him: "For as I Ezek.33.11. live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Let us not stand, therefore, pausing upon it, and considering whether we shall hearken to God's call or no, nor say severally within ourselves, 'How shall I part with my profits? How shall I deny myself the enjoyment of my sensual pleasures? How shall I forsake my darling and beloved sins?' But rather say, 'How shall I abide the judgment of the great God? How shall I escape, if I neglect so great [Heb.2. 3.] Salvation as I am now called and invited to?' For we may assure ourselves this is the great and only end why God calls so pathetically upon us to come unto Him, that so we may be delivered from His wrath, and enjoy His love and favour for ever.

Thus we see what it is that God calls mankind both from and to; He calls them from darkness to light, from idolatry to true religion, from sin to holiness, from earth to Heaven, and from the deepest misery to the highest happiness that they are capable of.

2. The next thing to be considered is, how God is pleased to call us; for which we must know, that,

(1.) He vouchsafed to call some with His Own mouth, as I may so speak, even by immediate revelations from Himself. Thus He called Abraham and Moses, and several of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. And thus He called Paul, Christ Himself calling from Heaven to Him, "Saul, Acts 9. 4. Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And it is observable that whosoever were thus called, they always obeyed. But this is not the calling here spoken of.

(2.) God calls all mankind by His works and providences. All the creatures in the world are so many tongues declaring the wisdom, power, goodness, and glory of God unto us, and so call upon us to praise, honour, and obey Him. And

all His providences have their several and distinct voices : His mercies bespeak our affections, and His judgments our fear. “Hear ye,” saith He, “the rod, and who hath appointed it.” The rod, it seems, hath a voice which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea, all the world, be called this way, yet neither is this the calling our Saviour means, when He saith, “Many are called, but few chosen.”

(3.) Lastly, Therefore God hath called many by the ministry of His Word, and of His servants the Prophets, the Apostles and their successors declaring it and explaining it to them. Thus God spake to our fathers by the Prophets, rising up early, and sending them to call sinners to repentance, by shewing them their sins, and the dangerous consequents of them. As when He sent His Prophet Isaiah, He bids him, “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and shew My people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins.” And they being convinced of, and humbled for their sins, then He sent His Prophets to invite them to accept of grace and pardon from Him, saying, in the language of the same Prophet, “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” And God having thus “at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoken in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, Whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds.” Who therefore said with His Own mouth, that “He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Hence as soon as ever He entered upon His ministry, He called to mankind, saying, “Repent, and believe the Gospel.” And, “Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden.” And when He was to depart hence, He left orders with His Apostles to go and call all nations, and teach them what He had commanded, promising that Himself would be with them “to the end of the world.” By virtue, therefore, of this commission, not only the Apostles themselves, but all succeeding ministers in all ages, to the end of the world, are sent to call mankind to embrace the Gospel, and to accept of the terms propounded in it. So that when we

His ministers preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they must not think we come in our own name; for, as the Apostle tells the Corinthians, “ We are ^{2 Cor. 5. 20.} ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” Hence in Scripture we are called also *κήρυκες*, ‘ heralds,’ and our office is *κηρύσσειν*, ‘ to proclaim as heralds,’ the will and pleasure of Almighty God unto mankind, to offer peace and pardon to all that have rebelled against our Lord and Master the King of Heaven, if they will now come in, and submit themselves unto Him: if not, in a most solemn and dreadful manner, to denounce His wrath and heavy displeasure against them. So that as the Angel was sent to call Lot out of Sodom, when the Lord was going to rain fire and brimstone from Heaven upon it; so, God being ready every moment, to shower down His fury and vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving world, He sends us to call men out of it, “ to open their eyes, and to turn them from dark- ^{Acts 26. 18.} ness to light, from the power of Satan unto God,” and to invite them to His court, to live with Him, and be happy for ever.

And that this is the proper meaning of our blessed Saviour in this place, where He saith, “ many are called,” is plain from the parable whereon these words are grounded; where the king is said to have sent his servants to call the guests which were bidden to the marriage-feast, and put words into their mouths, telling them what to say (verse 4), as He hath given us also instructions how to call and invite mankind in His Holy Word. And when, of the many which were called, there would but few come, hence our Saviour uttered this expression, that “ many are called, but few chosen.” From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not such as were called immediately from God Himself, for they were but few; nor yet such as are called by the works of creation and providence, for so not many only, but all are called; but He means such as are called by His Word, and by His servants and ministers reading, preaching, and explaining of it.

3. And verily that many have been, and still are called in this sense, which is the next thing I promised to shew,

I need not stand long to prove. For our Saviour, having commanded His Apostles to go and call all nations to His faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, Matt. xxviii. 19, it cannot be denied but that the Apostles presently dispersed themselves, and preached the Gospel to all nations; which they did so effectually, that in few years after, even in St. Paul's time, "The mystery of the Gospel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith." And in St. John's time, "some were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Yea, so mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed, that the ancients compared it to lightning, that immediately dispersed itself, and was seen all the world over. So that in less than two hundred years, "Ab ortu solis ad occasum lex Christiana suscepta est:" 'the Christian religion was received all the world over, from east to west,' as Lactantius, who then lived, asserts. From which time, therefore, how many thousands of millions of souls have been called to the faith of Christ by the preaching of His Gospel! And not to speak of other nations, how soon did the Sun of Righteousness rise upon these western parts of the world, and particularly upon this nation wherein we dwell! several of Christ's Own Disciples and Apostles, as Simon Zelotes, James the son of Zebedee, Joseph of Arimathea, Aristobulus, and St. Paul himself, being all recorded by ecclesiastical writers to have preached the Gospel to this nation. Be sure in less than two hundred years the Christian faith was here received: Tertullian himself saying expressly, "Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo subdita:" 'The Romans could scarcely come at Britain, but Christ hath conquered it.' And soon after him, Arnobius saith that the Gospel, "Nec ipsos Indos latuit à parte Orientis, nec ipsos Britannos à parte Occidentis:" 'was not concealed either from the Indians in the Eastern part of the world, nor from the Britons themselves in the West.' And since the Gospel was first here planted, how many have been called by it to the faith of Christ! Yea, through the mercy of the Most High God, how many at this moment are called all the nation over! And to come still closer to ourselves, all that read this have, I doubt not, been often called heretofore, and

Rom. 16. 26.

Rev. 7. 9.

[Inst.
Divin. lib. 5.
cap. 13.]

[Adv. Jud.
cap. 7, tom.
1, p. 212. D.
Ed. Rigalt.]

[In Psal.
147.]

now are called again. For in the Name of the Most High God, and of His Son Christ, I pray and "beseech you" all ^{1 Pet. 2. 11.} "as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul," to repent of your sins, and believe the Gospel. I call and invite you also to accept the offers of grace and pardon which are made you in Jesus Christ, to sit down with Him at His Own table, and feed by faith upon His Body and Blood, that so you may partake of the merits of His death and passion, and so live with Him for evermore. Thus you are all called, but I fear there are but few chosen.

II. Having thus explained and proved the first part of this proposition, that "many are called," we must now consider the meaning, truth, and reasons of the other part of it, "but few are chosen." Πολλοὶ γὰρ εἰσι κλητοί, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἐκλεκτοί, "For many are called, but few chosen;" that is, there are but few which are so approved of by God, as to be elected and chosen from the other part of the world to inherit eternal life. That this is the main drift and scope of our blessed Saviour in these words, is plain from the foregoing parable, which gave Him occasion to pronounce them: for there all that were first called refused to come to the marriage-feast which they were invited to, and of them which came, some had not on their wedding-garment; that is, although they came into the outward profession of the Gospel, yet [they] did not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewise were excluded; upon which our Saviour adds these words, "For many are called, but few chosen." From whence it is easy to observe his meaning in general to be only this, that although many were called to partake of the privileges and graces of His Gospel, yet seeing of those who were called many would not come at all, and of those who come many do not come so as the Gospel requires of them, with their wedding-garment on; hence, of the many who are called, there are but few chosen to partake of the marriage-feast, that is, of the glorious promises made in the Gospel to those that come aright unto it. Few, not absolutely in themselves considered, but few comparatively in respect of the many which are not chosen; or

rather few in comparison of the many which are called. For if we consider them absolutely in themselves, they are

Matt. 8. 11. certainly very many: our Saviour Himself saith, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven."

Rev. 7. 9. And in the Revelation you read of many thousands that were sealed of every tribe. Yea, there was "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white, and palms in their hands." Insomuch, that for all the numberless number

De Civ. Dei, of fallen or apostatized angels, St. Austin was of opinion, l. xxii. c. 1. that there will be as many men saved, as there are angels damned, or rather more. For, saith he, upon the fall of the angels and men, He determined to gather together, by His infinite grace, so many out of the mortal progeny, "ut indè suppleat et instauret partem quæ lapsa est angelorum," 'that He might from thence make up and restore that part of the angels which was fallen;' "ac sic illa dilecta et superna civitas non fraudetur suorum numero civium, quin etiam fortassis et uberiore lætetur," 'and so that beloved city which is above may not be deprived of the number of its citizens, but perhaps rejoice in having more.' Which notion he grounds upon those words of our Saviour in this chapter, "For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are ἰσάγγελοι, as the angels of God in Heaven," or as the words may be interpreted, they are equal to the angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect angels, as that learned and pious father expounds it. But howsoever that be, this is certain, that the number of men chosen and saved will be very great, considered absolutely in themselves; and yet notwithstanding, if they be compared with the many more which are called, they are but very few. Christ's flock is, as

Matt. 22.
30.

Luke 12. 32.

Himself styles it, μικρὸν ποίμνιον, 'a very little, little flock;' that is, in comparison of the vast multitudes of souls that flock after the world and sin. As in a garden there are but few choice flowers in comparison of the weeds that grow in it; there are but very few diamonds and precious

stones in comparison of pebbles and gravel upon the sea-shore; in the richest mines there is far more dross than gold and silver;—so is it in the Church of Christ: there is but little wheat in comparison of the tares that come up with it; Christ hath a great many hangers-on, but few faithful and obedient servants; there are many that speak Him very fair, and make a plausible profession of the faith and religion which He taught, but where shall we find one that practiseth it? If there be here one, and there another, two or three in a parish, or perhaps in a whole city, what is this to the innumerable company of such as are called by Him, and baptized into His Name, and yet leave Him to follow after the world and vanity? Oh, what just ground had our Saviour to say, “Many are called, but few chosen!”

But to demonstrate the truth of this proposition still more fully, and as clearly as possibly I can, I must first lay down one principle as a postulatam, which I suppose all will acknowledge to be true; and that is this,—that whatsoever profession a man makes of the Christian religion, it will avail him nothing without the practice of it; or if you will take it in our Saviour’s Own words, “Not every one,” saith Matt. 7. He, “that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father Which is in Heaven;” or, as the Apostle expresseth Rom. 2. 13. it, “For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified;” that is, it is not our hearing and knowing our duty that will stand us in any stead before God, but our doing of it: it is not our believing that we may be saved by believing in Christ, whereby we can be saved, without actual believing in Him,—without such a faith whereby we depend upon Him for the pardon and salvation of our immortal souls, and consequently for the assistance of His grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey His Gospel, and to perform all such things as Himself hath told us are necessary in order to our everlasting happiness: and whatsoever faith we pretend to, unless it comes to this, that it puts us upon universal obedience to all the commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good; for it is not such a faith as Christ requires, which always works by love, conquers the world, subdues sin,

purifies the heart, and sanctifies the whole soul, wheresoever it comes. It is such a faith as this which is the wedding-garment, without which no man is chosen or admitted to partake of those celestial banquets which Christ our Saviour hath provided for us. And, therefore, no man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himself to be elected or chosen to eternal Salvation, that is not holy in all manner of conversation; God Himself having told us expressly, that

Heb. 12. 14. "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." So that, having God's Own word for it, we may positively and confidently assert, that no man in the world can, upon just grounds, be reputed as chosen by God, that doth not in all things, to the utmost of his power, conform himself, and adjust his actions, to the laws and commands of God. So that how many soever are called, how many soever come into the outward profession of the Christian religion, yet none of them can be said to be chosen, but such as are real and true saints. And how few those are, is a matter which we have more cause to bewail than to prove! Howsoever, that we may see that we have but too much reason to believe this assertion of our blessed Saviour, that "many are called, but few chosen," I desire we may but consider the state of Christendom in general, and weigh the lives and actions of all such as profess to believe in Christ, view them well, and examine them by the Gospel rules, and then we shall soon conclude that there are but few chosen; or, to bring it home more closely to ourselves, who are all called, take out from amongst us all such persons as come not up to the terms of the Gospel, and we shall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed, who can be discerned and judged, by the light either of reason or Scripture, to be chosen by God to eternal life. For, take out from amongst us,

1. All atheistical persons, who, though they are baptized into the Name of Christ, and so are called to the faith of Christ, yet neither believe in Christ nor God; such fools as

Ps. 14. 1. say in their heart, "There is no God." For all will grant that they are not chosen by God, who do not so much as believe that there is any God to choose them. Neither can it be imagined that the All-wise God should choose such fools as these to be with Him, who will not so much as

acknowledge Him to be. And yet how many such fools have we amongst us, whose practices have so depraved their principles, that they will not believe there is any God, because they wish there was none! And when these are taken from amongst the called, I fear the number of the chosen amongst them will be much lessened.

2. Take out from amongst us all ignorant persons, that understand not the common principles of religion, or the fundamental articles of that faith which they are called to: for that these are not chosen, is plain, in that though they be called by Christ, yet they know not what He would have them do, nor yet Who it is that calls them. And therefore, as God would have all men to be saved, so for that end He would have them "come to the knowledge of the truth." ^{1 Tim. 2. 4.} That is, He would have them know all such truths as Himself hath revealed to them in His Gospel, as necessary to be known in order to their eternal salvation, without which knowledge it is impossible for a man to perform what is required of him; for though a man may know his duty and not do it, no man can do his duty unless he first know it. And therefore gross ignorance and saving faith cannot possibly consist or stand together: for saving faith is always joined with, or puts a man upon sincere obedience to, all the commands of God: but how can any man obey the commands of God, who neither knows that God Whose commands they are, nor yet what these commands are which God would have him to obey? No, certainly, a blind man may as well follow his temporal calling, how intricate soever it be, as he that is grossly ignorant the high calling of a Christian; for he is altogether incapable of it, and so not only unworthy, but unfit to be chosen to it. Hence God Himself hath told us, that He is so far from choosing such as live and die in this manner without understanding, that He will never shew them any mercy or favour. "For it is ^{Isa. 27. 11.} a people," saith He, "of no understanding; therefore He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will shew them no favour." Neither doth He ever blame mankind for anything in the world more than for not knowing, and therefore not considering Him that ^{ch. 1. 2, 3; Hos. 4. 1.} made and feeds them. And that we may be still further

Hos. 4. 6. assured that He chooseth no such persons to dwell with Him as do not know Him and His commands, He hath given it us under His hand, that He rejects them, saying, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the Law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.”

Jer. 4. 22. That, therefore, no persons that are grossly ignorant, and live and die in that condition, are chosen to eternal Salvation, I suppose, the premises considered, all will acknowledge. But, alas! how many such persons are there in the world! how many amongst ourselves! How many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any worldly business, but are mere novices, or rather idiots, in matters of true religion! or, as the Prophet words it, “who are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.” How many such ignorant and sottish people are there in every corner of the land, and in this city itself! where they do or may hear the word of God read and expounded to them every day; and yet ask them seriously of the grounds of the Christian religion, and the reason of the hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a satisfactory or rational answer, than if they had never heard of any such book as the Bible in the world, or had been born and bred in the remotest corners of America, where the sound of the Gospel never yet came. But all such, how many soever they be, though they be called, they must stand aloof off; for so long as they are such, we may be confident they are not chosen. Insomuch, that should we take away no other from the number of the called but only such as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called there are but few chosen.

3. Take out from amongst us all vicious, profane, debauched, and impenitent persons; all that make a mock of sin, and that jeer at holiness, that live as without God in the world, as if they had neither God to serve, nor souls to save; —as if there was neither a Hell to avoid nor a Heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their business to gratify their flesh, and to indulge their appetite with carnal and sensual

pleasures, looking no higher than to be fellow-sharers with the brutes that perish ; such as in their bewitching cups stick not to fly in the face of Heaven itself, and dare challenge God Himself to damn them ; and make lying their usual dialect, and swearing their pleasing rhetoric ; and are so far from being troubled for these their sins, that they take pleasure and delight in them ; so far from being ashamed of them, that they make them their pride and glory, and so make it their pleasure to displease God, and their highest honour to dishonour Him that is honour and perfection itself. For that no such persons as those who live and die in such notorious crimes upon earth are chosen to live with God in Heaven, none can deny that believes the Scriptures to be true, which in plain terms assure us of the contrary : “ Know ye not,” saith the Apostle, “ that the unrighteous ^{1 Cor. 6. 9,} shall not inherit the Kingdom of God ? Be not deceived, ^{10.} neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.” And St. John tells us, that only they who do the Commandments enter into the city of Heaven : but “ without are dogs, and sorcerers, and ^{Rev. 22. 14,} whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and who- ^{15.}soever loveth and maketh a lie.” So that all such persons, without timely repentance, are most certainly excluded from the number of the chosen. And how many are there amongst us who allow themselves in some such sin or other ; or rather, where shall we find a man that doth not ? But to all persons that continue in such sins, I may say, stand you by, you have no ground as yet to think that you are chosen, but have rather all the reason in the world to believe, that if you go on in such a sinful course, you will never know what Heaven or happiness is. But when all such are taken out of the number of the called, what a piteous scantling will be left behind ! In plain terms, we have just cause to fear that ignorant and dissolute persons make up the greatest part of those who are called Christians.

4. Take out from amongst us all hypocritical and false-hearted persons, that seem indeed to be honest and good men, but still retain some secret sin or other, which will as

certainly keep them out of Heaven as the most notorious or scandalous crime that is ; such as our Saviour compares to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, Matt. 23. 27. “but are within full of dead men’s bones and of all uncleanness.” Such whose outward conversation is altogether unblamable ; so that no man can charge them with theft, perjury, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like ; but in the meanwhile they are malicious, uncharitable, censorious, proud, self-conceited, disobedient to parents or magistrates, covetous, ambitious, and the like. And so, though they be free from those sins which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad sins, which the others may be freed from. To which also may be added all such as make indeed a greater show of piety, and seem mighty zealous for the little circumstances of religion, but neglect the weightier matters of the Law, the love of God, mercy, justice, and the like. But for all the vain hopes and high conceits such persons may have of themselves, they are far from being such as the Gospel requires of them, and by consequence from the number of the chosen here spoken of. For the Pharisees were such persons as these, and yet our Saviour Himself tells us, ch. 5. 20. that “Except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we shall in no ways enter into the Kingdom of God.” And when He tells us elsewhere, Luke 13. 3. that “Except we repent, we must all likewise perish,” His meaning is not that we must repent of some, or many, or most, but of all our sins ; and so repent of them as to turn from them ; and so turn from all sin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of conversation ; otherwise our Saviour Himself assures us that He will never save us, but we must perish without remedy.

Let any man consider this, and then tell me what He thinks of the number of the chosen, whether it be not very small indeed, in comparison of the many which are called ? For, not to speak of other parts of Christendom, all the people of this nation are called to the faith of Christ ; and how many they are, I cannot say we all know, for it is past any man’s knowledge. But where is the man amongst us all that doth not harbour some secret lust or other in his bosom ?—yea, of the many men in this nation, where is he

that can say with David, "I have kept myself from mine [Ps. 18. 23.] iniquity?" Or, to use the words of the Prophet, "Run ye [Jer. 5. 1.] to and fro through the streets of the city, and see now and know, and seek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, that serveth the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind." I do not deny but there are a great many professors of religion amongst us, who would fain be accounted more strict and holy than their neighbours, so as to be reckoned the religious; as the friars and nuns are in the Church of Rome: but are they therefore to be esteemed the elect and chosen of God, because they fancy themselves to be so? Or rather is not their pride and self-conceitedness an argument that they are not so? Blessed be God for it, I have no spleen nor rancour against any of them, but heartily wish they were as truly good and holy as they would seem to be. But what? Is not pride a sin? Is not self-conceitedness a sin? Is not irreverence in God's worship a sin? Is not disobedience to magistrates a sin? Is not uncharitableness or censoriousness a sin? Certainly all these will be found to be sins another day. And, therefore, whatsoever pretences men may make unto religion, if they allow themselves in such sins as these, they are as far from being in the number of the chosen as the most dissolute and scandalous persons in the world: but when these, too, are removed from the number of the called, how few of them will appear to be chosen!

5. Yet once again. Take out all such as believe not in our Lord Jesus Christ, but, being morally honest and faithful in performing their duty to God and man, trust more in their own good works than to His merit and Mediation. For that all such are to be excluded, is plain from the whole tenour of the Gospel, which assures us, that there is no Salvation to be had but only by Jesus Christ; nor by Him neither, but only by believing in Him. But if Christ should come this day to judgment, would He find faith upon earth? Verily, I fear, He would find but very little, if any at all, amongst us: He might, I believe, find some pretty strict and circumspect in obeying of His other laws, or at least in endeavouring to do so. But for man to do all that

is required of him, and yet to count himself an unprofitable servant,—for a man to do all he can, and yet rest upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jesus Christ, for life and happiness,—this is hard indeed to flesh and blood, and as rare to find as it is to find a rose among the weeds and thistles of a barren wilderness, or a diamond amongst the gravel upon the sea-shore: here and there I believe there may be found one, but so rarely, that they can scarce be termed any, be sure but very few, in comparison of the many who are called.

Now, let us put these things together, and we shall easily grant that this saying of our Saviour was but too true, that “many are called, but few chosen.” And to bring it closer to ourselves, we are all called to repent and believe the Gospel: now, take out from amongst us all ignorant persons, that have heard indeed, but understand not what they hear; all atheistical persons, that believe not really there is a God to judge them; all debauched sinners, that live in open and notorious crimes; all pharisaical hypocrites, that avoid open, but indulge themselves in secret sins, that have
 [2Tim.3.5.] “the form but not the power of godliness;” and all such
 [Phil. 3. 6.] who are as St. Paul was before his conversion, “as touching the righteousness of the Law blameless,” but yet believe not in Jesus Christ. Take out, I say, all such persons as I have named from amongst us, and what a small number proportionably should we have left behind! how many would be excluded the presence of God! how few would continue in it! What cause should we then have to say with our Saviour, that “many are called, but few are chosen!”

Having thus explained the meaning, and confirmed the truth, of this proposition, that many are called, but few chosen, we must consider the reasons of it, how it comes to pass, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen; a thing which I confess we have all just cause to wonder and admire at. Are not men all rational creatures? Are they not able to distinguish betwixt good and evil? Do not they understand their own interest? What, then, should be the reason that so many of them should be called and invited to the chiefest good, the highest happiness their natures are capable of, yet so few of them should mind or

prosecute it, so as to be chosen or admitted into the participation of it? What shall we ascribe it to? The will and pleasure of Almighty God, as if He delighted in the ruin of His creatures, and therefore, although He calls them, He would not have them to come unto Him? No, that cannot be; for in His revealed will, which is the only rule that we are to walk by, He hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it, too, with an oath, saying, "As I live, saith Ezek. 33. 11. the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his way and live." And elsewhere He assures us, that He would "have all men to be 1 Tim. 2. 4. saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." And therefore, if we believe what God saith, nay, if we believe what He hath sworn, we must needs acknowledge, that it is His will and pleasure that as many as are called should be all chosen and saved. And indeed, if He had no mind that we should come when we are called to Him, why should He call us all to come? Why hath He given us His Word, His Ministers, His Ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to Him, if after all He was resolved not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us that we should have such hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and Governor of the world, especially considering that He hath told us the contrary, as plainly as it was possible for Him to express His mind to us. I do not deny but that, according to the Apostle, "Known unto God are all His works from Acts 15. 18. the beginning of the world." And there are several passages in Scripture which intimate unto us God's eternal election of all that are truly pious, to live with Him for ever. But it is not for us to be so bold and impudent as to pry into the secrets of God, nor so curious as to search into His eternal and incomprehensible decrees; but we must still remember the words of Moses, that "secret things belong Deut. 29. 29. unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of His Law." Whatsoever is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal Salvation, is clearly revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures; and therefore what we there read belongs unto us to know, neither are we to look any further than to His

revealed will. But God in the Scriptures doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elsewhere, that
 2 Pet. 3. 9. He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is the revealed will of God, which we are to acquiesce in, and rest fully satisfied with, so as to act accordingly, without concerning ourselves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not in His secret but revealed will, that we are to search for the reasons of this proposition, that "many are called, but few chosen."

Now, in consulting the Word of God to find out the reasons of this so strange assertion, that many are called, but few chosen, I know no better or fitter place to search for them than this parable, which gave our blessed Saviour the occasion of asserting it; in which it is very observable that He meddles not at all with any reasons *à priori*, deduced from the eternal decrees of His Father, but He only suggests to us the reasons *à posteriori*, drawn from the disposition and carriage of men, why so many of them are called, and yet so few chosen.

For the opening whereof we must know that the end and intent of this parable was only to shew the entertainment which His Gospel had then, and should still meet with in the world; many refusing to embrace it at all, and of those who embrace it, many still walking unworthy of it. So that the issue and consequence of it will be, that though many be called to it, there are but few chosen. And He hath so worded the parable that we need not seek any further for the reasons of this His conclusion from it, they being almost clearly couched in the parable itself; which that we may the better understand, I shall open and explain them particularly, so as to make them intelligible, I hope, to the meanest capacity.

1. The first reason, therefore, why so many are called, but so few chosen, is because they who are called to Christ will not come unto Him: for this is the first reason which
 Matt. 22. 3. our Saviour Himself in the parable assigns for it: "The king," saith He, "sent his servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage, and they would not come." "And they would not come;" so that the great fault is still in the

wills of men, which are generally so depraved and corrupt, that though they be called never so oft, and cannot but in reason acknowledge that it is their interest to come, yet they have so strange an aversion to the holiness and purity of the Gospel which they are called to, that they will not come unto it, only because they will not; for here they who are first bidden give no reason for refusal, only it is said, they would not come. And good cause why: for, when we have searched into all the reasons imaginable, why men do not fully submit themselves to the obedience of the Gospel, they will all resolve and empty themselves into this, that they will not because they will not. Let ministers say what they can, let the Scriptures say what they will, let God Himself say what He pleases, yet sinners men are, and sinners they will be, in spite of them all; as the Prophet, rebuking the people for their sins, said, "But thou saidst, There is no Jer. 2. 25. hope: no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." And so it is to this day; we tell them of their sins, and the dangerous consequences of them; we tell them that they must not love the world, but seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness in the first place; we tell them from Christ's Own mouth, that except they repent and forsake their sins, they must perish; but they say in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for they have loved the world, and after it they will go; they have found pleasure in the commission of their sins, and therefore they will commit them. Christ calls them to come unto Him, and they know no reason why they should not, but howsoever they will not come. If we were but once willing, the work was done; for what our wills are really inclined to, we cannot but use the utmost of our endeavour to attain. But the mischief is, men read the Gospel, they hear Christ calling upon them to believe and obey it, but their wills are still averse from it; there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them against such exact and real holiness as the Gospel requires of them. So that if they perish, they must blame themselves for it; it is their own choice: they choose and prefer their sins, with all the miseries that attend them, before the Gospel of Christ, with all the glory and happiness which is offered in it; and therefore, as God said to His

- Ezek. 33. 11. people, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" so say I to these men, Repent, and believe the Gospel; for why will ye die, why will ye perish eternally? Have you any reason for it? None in the world but your own wills. Christ hath told you in plain terms, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out;" but if you will not come unto Him, who can help that? Are not yourselves only in the fault? Will not your blood be upon your own heads? What could Christ have done more for you than He hath done? What could He have suffered more for you than He hath suffered? How could He call you to Him more plainly or pathetically than He doth? But if, after all this, you will not come unto Him, you must even thank yourselves for all the torments you must ere long suffer and undergo. And this is, indeed, the case of the greatest part of mankind, that though they be called and invited to partake of all the merits of Christ's death and passion, yet they will not come unto Him. And this is the first and great reason why so many are called, and yet so few chosen.
- John 6. 37. ch. 5. 40.

2. The second reason is, because men do not really believe that they are invited to such glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour Himself intimates in the parable. For when they who were bidden would not come upon the first invitation, as not believing the message which those servants brought them, the king sent forth other servants, saying, "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." When the first servants were not believed, he sent others with fuller instructions, giving them orders to acquaint the guests that all things were now ready, and to assure them that it was to a marriage-feast they were invited. But it seems, whatsoever the first or second servants could say, it was to no purpose; they would not believe them, and therefore sent them away as they came: whereby our Saviour exactly discovers to us the entertainment that His Gospel always did, and still would, meet with in the world. Before His Own coming into the world, He sent His Prophets to invite mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their sins might

Matt. 22. 4.

be blotted out, and their souls admitted into the grace and favour of Almighty God, and so partake of eternal glory, which the Prophets call men to, under the notion of a feast: "A feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined," Isa. 25. 6. which they called all men to, saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." ch. 55. 1. But how their message was received, the same Prophet declares, saying, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" ch. 53. 1. and so it is since. For when the Prophets could not be credited, God afterwards sent His Apostles, and still to this day is sending servant after servant to invite men to grace and pardon, to Heaven and eternal happiness. But we His ministers may still say with the Prophet, "Who hath believed our report?" We tell men that unless they repent and turn to God, iniquity will be their ruin; we tell them also, that if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall be saved; and if they be holy here, they shall be happy hereafter. But what signifies our telling them of these things, if they believe not what we say? And yet who doth? Men give us the hearing, censure what they have heard, and that is all the use they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one truth that we make known or expound unto them; and this being the case not only of some few, but of the greatest part of mankind, hence it comes to pass, that so many are called, and so few are chosen; even because they who are called do not believe it, and so it is all one with them whether they be called or not. Be sure God chooseth none but such as believe the word He sends unto them; for, as the Apostle saith, "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." James 2. 5. If they be not rich in faith, they are not for His purpose; and seeing there are but few that are so, hence of the many which are called there are "but few chosen."

3. Another reason why of the many which are called there are so few chosen, is because they have no real esteem or value for the things they are called to; as it is in the parable, when the servants were sent to call upon them to make haste to the feast, because all things were ready, it is said that they made light of it. They did not think it worth Matt. 22. 5.

their while to go, though it was to a feast, to a marriage-feast, yea, to the marriage-feast of so great a person as a king's son — no, not though they were invited by the king himself unto it. Thus it was in ancient times, and thus it is still; the King of Heaven sends to invite men to His court, to lay aside their filthy garments, and to put on the robes that He hath prepared for them, that they may be holy as He is holy, and so live with Him and be happy for ever. But they make light of such things as these; they can see no such beauty in Christ why they should desire Him; no such excellency in God Himself why they should be in love with Him; and as for Heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no; though they be called, they matter not whether they be chosen to it or not; and hence likewise it is, that of the many which are called there are so few chosen.

4. Another reason is, because they who are called are generally addicted to the things of this life; they have the serpent's curse upon them, to feed upon the dust of the earth, and therefore slight all the overtures that are made them of Heaven and eternal happiness. As our Saviour Himself intimates in this parable, saying, that when they were invited, “they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” Thus we read of the Pharisees, that they being covetous, when they heard the words of Christ they derided Him. And thus it is to this day; though men be called to Christ, they are so much taken up with worldly business, that they can find no time to come unto Him; but away they go again, one to his trade, another to his merchandise. These are the things that most men's minds are wholly bent upon, and therefore they will not be persuaded to leave them to go to Christ.

It is true, if He called them to great estates, if He called them to a good bargain, if He called them to crowns and sceptres in this world, then they would all strive which should be chosen first; but the things that He calls us to are quite of another nature: He calls us to repent of our sins, to believe in Him, to condemn the world, to have our conversations in Heaven. But these are things which men do not love to hear of, as being contrary to their earthly temper

and inclinations; and therefore, we who are God's ministers may call our hearts out before they will set themselves in good earnest to mind them. Or, to bring it home still closer to us, how often have we all been invited to that spiritual feast, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole congregation is called to partake of it! Scarce one in twenty think it worth their while to stay to have their share in it. What can be the reason of this, but that our minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater concernment to us than all the merits of Christ's death and passion? And therefore it is no wonder that so many of us are called, and so few chosen, seeing we ourselves choose the toys and trifles of this transient world, before all those real joys which in the Gospel we are called and invited to.

5. In the next place, many of them which are called have so strange an antipathy to God and goodness, that they do not only slight their Heavenly, in comparison of their earthly calling, but they hate and abuse such as are sent to call them, as our Saviour Himself intimates, *Matt. xxii. 6.* O barbarous cruelty! what hurt, what injury is done unto them? They are invited to a feast, and for this they are angry, and kill the messengers which are sent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all ages. This was the entertainment, this the requital, that most of the Prophets received for the Divine message they brought to mankind. Yea, Christ Himself, *Matt. 23. 37.* the Son and Heir of God, was put to death for inviting men to life and happiness, and so were His Apostles too: and so it is to this day. There is still a secret malice and hatred in men's hearts against such as sincerely endeavour to preach the Gospel clearly and fully to them. We tell them of their sins, we acquaint them with the danger they are in, we call upon them to forsake and avoid them, we invite them to Christ, and so to Heaven and eternal happiness; and for this many of them are angry with us, and incensed against us. They may forgive us this wrong; I can assure them we intend them no evil, but all the good we do or can desire to our own souls; that whatsoever the success be, it is still our duty to call upon them, to advise them of their duty, and if possible to reclaim them from their sins; and if they be

angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's saying, that "many are called, but few chosen."

Matt. 22.
11-13.

Eph. 4. 1.

Mark 6. 20.

Acts 26. 28.

6. The last reason which our Saviour gives in this parable, why "many are called, but few chosen," is because of those who are called, and come too at their call, many come not aright, which He signifies by the man that came without his wedding-garment; where, although He mentions but one man, yet, under that one is comprehended all of the same kind, even all such persons as have the Gospel preached to them, and so are called and invited to all the graces and privileges proposed in it; all such as profess to believe in Christ, and to expect happiness and salvation from Him, yet will not come up to the terms which He propounds in His Gospel to them, even to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called." And, indeed, this is the great reason of all, why of so many which are called there are so few chosen, because there are so few which do all things which the Gospel requires of them. Many, like Herod, will do many things; and are almost persuaded to be Christians, as Agrippa was. How zealous are some for, how violent are others against, the little ceremonies and circumstances of religion, and in the meanwhile neglect and let slip the power and substance of it! How demure are some in their carriage towards men, but irreverent and slovenly in the worship of Almighty God! How devout would others seem towards God, but are still careless and negligent of their duty towards men! Some are all for the duties of the first table without the second, others for the second without the first. Some are altogether for obedience and good works, without faith in Christ: others are as much for faith in Christ, without obedience and good works. Some would do all themselves, as if Christ had done nothing for them; others fancy that Christ hath so done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themselves to do; and so betwixt both these sorts of people, which are the far greater part of those who are called, either the merits, or else the laws of Christ, are slighted and contemned. But is this the way to be saved? No, surely: if I know any thing of the Gospel, it requires both repentance and faith in Christ; that

we perform sincere obedience to all His laws, and yet trust in Him, and Him alone, for pardon, acceptance, and salvation. And whosoever comes short of this, though he be called, we may be sure he is not chosen; though he come to the marriage-feast with those that are invited, yet wanting this wedding-garment, he will be cast out again with shame and confusion of face. So that it is not our doing some, or many, or most of the things which the Gospel requires, that will do our business, unless we do all to the utmost of our skill and power. But where shall we find the man that doeth so? What ground have we but to acknowledge that our Saviour had too much cause to say, "Many are called, but few chosen;" which I fear is but too true; not only of others, but ourselves too.

I say not this to discourage any one: no, it is my hearty desire and prayer to the Eternal God, that every soul of us might be chosen and saved. But my great fear is, that many think it so easy a matter to go to Heaven, that if they do but say their prayers, and hear sermons now and then, they cannot miss of it, and therefore need not trouble themselves any further about it. But they must give me leave to tell them, that this will not serve their turn; if it would, most of those which are called would be chosen too. Whereas our Saviour Himself tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this should be so far from discouraging of us, that it should rather excite us to greater diligence about it than heretofore we may have used, as our Saviour Himself intimates in His answer to this question. And verily, what greater encouragement can we have, than to consider, that though there be but few chosen, yet there are some? For why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? Are we not all called to Christ? Are not we all invited, yea, commanded to believe in His Name, and obey His Gospel, that so we may partake of everlasting glory? Let us then all set about that work in good earnest, which we are called to. Let us but fear God, and keep His Commandments, and believe in His Son for His acceptance of us; and then we need not fear: for though of the many others which are called, there are but few chosen, yet we few

Luke 13. 23,
24.

who are all called shall be all chosen; chosen to live with God Himself and Jesus Christ, and to sing forth His praises for evermore.

IX. THOUGHTS UPON THE APPEARANCE OF CHRIST THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, OR THE BEATIFIC VISION.

So long as we are in the body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its senses, seldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through one or other of them. Though we are all able to abstract our thoughts when we please from matter, and fix them upon things that are purely spiritual, there are but few that ever do it; but few, even among those also that have such things revealed to them by God Himself, and so have infinitely more and firmer ground to believe them than any one or all their senses put together can afford. Such are the great truths of the Gospel, for which we have the infallible Word and testimony of the Supreme Truth; yet, seeing they are not the objects of sense, but only of our faith, though we profess to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them, and are usually no more affected with them, than as if there were no such things in being. Hence it hath pleased God, in great compassion to our infirmity, not only to reveal and make known such spiritual things to us in plain and easy terms, but likewise to bring them as near as possible to our senses, by representing them to us under the names and characters of such sensible objects as bear the greatest resemblance to them; that we who are led so much by our senses, may by them also be directed how to apprehend those spiritual objects which He hath told us of, on purpose that we may believe them upon His word.

Thus He often useth the words, hand, eye, and the like, to signify His Own Divine perfection to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the Gospel to the people, by parables and similitudes of things commonly seen and done

among themselves. The Prophets also frequently took the same course, as might be shewn by many instances; but one of the most remarkable is that in Mal. iv. 2, where the Prophet, in the Name of God, speaking of Christ's coming into the world, expresses it by the rising of the sun, saying, "To you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in His wings." For that Jesus Christ is that Sun of Righteousness here spoken of, is so plain from the context, and the whole design of the Prophet, that I need not insist upon the proving of it; but shall only observe, that this being the last of all the Prophets in the Old Testament, he shuts up his own and all the other prophecies with a clear prediction of Christ, and His forerunner John the Baptist, whom he calls Elijah, or Elias, and concludes his prophecy with these words concerning Him, "Behold, I Mal. 4. 5, 6. will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord. And He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth (or rather the land) with a curse." For that by Elijah is here meant John the Baptist, we are assured by Christ Himself, Matt. xi. 14. And it is very observable, that as this Prophet ends the Old Testament with a prediction of Elias, so St. Luke begins the New with a relation how John the Baptist was born, and so came into the world a little before Christ, as the morning-star that appeared before the rising of the Sun of Righteousness.

But of the day which shall come at the rising of that glorious Sun, the Prophet saith, that it "shall burn as an ver. 1. oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." It will be a terrible day to those that shall obstinately refuse to walk in the light of it; they shall be all consumed, as we read the unbelieving Jews were at the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened soon after that Sun was up. But then turning Himself, as it were, to His Own people, Almighty God here by His Prophet cheers and comforts them, saying to them, "But unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing

in His wings." He shall arise to all, but to the other with such a scorching heat as shall burn them up, to these with healing in His wings, or rays, so as not to hurt, but heal them of all their maladies.

Now, that which I chiefly design, by God's assistance, to shew from these words, is, what thoughts they suggest to us concerning our blessed Saviour, by calling Him "the Sun of Righteousness." But to make the way as plain as I can,

I. We must first consider to whom He is here said to "arise with healing in His wings," even to those that fear the Name of God; *i. e.* to those who, firmly believing in God, and being fully persuaded of His infinite power, justice, and mercy, and also of the truth of all His threats and promises, stand continually in awe of Him, not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend Him, nor leave any thing undone that He would have them do. Such, and such only, can be truly said to fear God. And therefore the fear of God in the Scriptures, especially of the Old Testament, is all along put for the whole duty of man; there being no duty that a man owes, either to God or his neighbour, but, if he really fears God, he will endeavour all he can to do it. But this necessarily supposes his belief in God and His Holy

Heb. 11. 6. Word, or rather proceeds originally from it. "For he that cometh unto God," so as to fear and obey Him, "must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him." So that, as no man can believe in God but he must needs fear Him, so no man can fear God unless he first believes in Him. From whence necessarily follows, that by those who are here said to fear the Name of God, we can understand no other but only such as are possessed with a firm belief in Him, and with a full persuasion of the truth and certainty of those Divine revelations that He hath made of Himself, and of His will to mankind, and therefore live accordingly.

Of these, and these only, it is here said, that to them "shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." Not to any other; no other being able to see His light, nor capable of those healing influences that proceed from Him. For though He be a Sun, He is not such a sun

as we see with our bodily eyes in the firmament, but “the Sun of Righteousness,” shining in the highest Heavens, beyond the reach of our senses, visible only to the eye of faith, the evidence of things not seen. Insomuch, that although He be risen, and darts down His beams to this lower world continually, yet they who have not faith, can neither see Him, nor enjoy any more benefit by Him, than as if He was not risen, or did not shine at all. As if a man be born stark blind, though the sun shine never so clear about him, he sees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at noon-day as much as at midnight; neither can you ever make him understand what light or colours are; for having not that sense by which alone such things can be perceived, he can never understand what you mean by such things, so as to form any true notion of them in his mind: so it is in our present case; though the Sun of Righteousness be risen, and shines most gloriously in the world, yet being the object only of our faith, without that a man can discern nothing of Him. He may, perhaps, talk of Him, as a blind man may talk of light; but all the while he knows not what he means by the words which he useth about Him. For he useth them only as words in course, taken up from those he talks with, without having any effect or operation at all upon his mind; whereas they who really believe God’s Word, and what is there revealed concerning the Sun of Righteousness, they see His light, they feel His heat, they experience the power and efficacy of His influences; and therefore, although they who have not faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they shall hear or read of Him, yet they who have, and act it upon what they hear or read out of God’s Holy Word concerning Him, they will find their thoughts and apprehensions of Him cleared up, and their affections inflamed to Him; so as to love and honour Him for the future, as the fountain of all that spiritual life, and light, and joy, they have: for to them He will “arise with healing in His wings.”

He did not only arise once, but He continually ariseth to those who believe in God, and fear Him. For thus saith the Lord, “To you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” It is true, He

speaks more especially of His Incarnation, or visible appearance in the world; but, by this manner of speaking, He intimates withal that this Sun of Righteousness is always shining upon His faithful people, more or less, in all ages, from the beginning to the end of this world. For in that it is said, "He shall arise," it is plainly supposed that He was the Sun of Righteousness before, and gave light unto the world, though not so clearly as when He was actually arisen. As we see and enjoy the light of the sun long before he riseth, from the first dawning of the day, though it grows clearer and clearer all along as he comes nearer and nearer to his rising: so the Sun of Righteousness began to enlighten the world as soon as it was darkened by sin; the day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every age. Adam himself saw something of this light; Abraham more:

John 8. 56. "Abraham rejoiced to see My day," saith this glorious Sun; "he saw it and was glad." David and the Prophets after him saw it most clearly, especially this the last of the Prophets; he saw this Sun in a manner rising, so that he could tell the people that it would suddenly get above their horizon:

Mal. 3. 1. "The Lord Whom ye seek," saith he, "shall suddenly come to His Temple;" and acquaints them also with the happy influences it would have upon them, saying, in the Name of God, "Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings."

II. "The Sun of Righteousness;" that is, as I observed before, "Jesus Christ the Righteous," Who is often foretold and spoke of under the name and notion of the Sun or Star that giveth light unto the world. "There shall come a Star out of Jacob," said Balaam. "And He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth," saith David. And the Prophet Isaiah, speaking of His coming, saith,

Isa. 9. 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a Great Light, and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the Light shined." For that this was spoken of Christ, we have the authority of the Evangelists. To the same purpose is that of the same Prophet,

Isa. 60. 1, 2. "Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the

Num. 24.

17.

2 Sam. 23.

4.

Isa. 9. 2.

Matt. 4. 16.

Isa. 60. 1, 2.

Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day," Isa. 60. 19. neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an Everlasting Light, and thy God thy glory." To which we may add the many places where Christ is called נֹרְאָה , which we translate "the Branch;" as, "I will bring forth My Servant the Branch;" Zech. 3. 8. "Behold the Man whose Name is the Branch;" ch. 6. 12. "I will Jer. 23. 5. raise up to David a righteous Branch;" ch. 33. 15. "and a Branch of righteousness." In all which places the original word signifies also "the rising of the sun," and is accordingly rendered by the LXX. $\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$, "oriens," not that part of the heavens where the sun riseth, but the sun itself as rising there: and so it is translated, also, both in the Syriac and Arabic versions. And where it is said, "In that day shall Isa. 4. 2. the Branch of the Lord be beautiful," in the LXX. it is $\epsilon\pi\iota\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\psi\epsilon\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\ \Theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$, "God shall shine forth:" in the Syriac, "The rising of the Lord shall be for glory;" in Arabic, "The Lord shall rise as the sun." And that this is the true sense of the word in all these places, appears from the prophecy of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist; for, speaking of Christ's coming, he expresses it, according to our translation, by saying, "The Day-spring from on high Luke 1. 78. hath visited us." But in the original it is the same word that the LXX. use in all the aforesaid places, $\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\lambda\acute{\eta}$, "oriens, the rising sun." And it is much to be observed, that all the said places of the Prophets are interpreted of the Messiah or Christ, by the Targum or Chaldee paraphrase made by the ancient Jews themselves; for נֹרְאָה 'the rising sun,' is there translated נְסִיחָא 'the Christ,' as if it was only another name for the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. From all which it appears, that when the Prophet here calls our Saviour Christ the Sun of Righteousness, he speaks according to the common sense and practice of the Church at the time.

And verily He may well be called the Sun, both in respect of what He is in Himself, and in respect of what He is to us. As there is but one sun in the firmament, it is the chief of all creatures that we see in the world. There is nothing upon earth but what is vastly inferior; the very

stars of Heaven seem no way comparable to it. It is the top, the head, the glory of all visible objects. In like manner, there is but one Saviour in the world; He is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the sun itself, but above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. “All things are put under His feet, and He is given to be Head over all things to the Church.”

Eph. 1. 21,
22.

1 Pet. 3. 22. The very angels, authorities, and powers of Heaven, “are all made subject to Him.” And that is the reason that He is said to be at the right hand of God, because He is preferred before, and set over the whole creation, next to the Almighty Creator Himself, where He now reigns and doeth whatsoever He pleaseth in Heaven and in earth.

And as the sun is in itself also the most glorious as well as the most excellent creature we see, of such transcendent beauty, splendour, and glory, that we cannot look steadfastly upon it but our eyes are presently dazzled; so is Christ

Matt. 17. 2. “the Sun of Righteousness;” when He was transfigured, “His face did shine as the sun.” When St. John had a

Rev. 1. 16. glimpse of Him, “he saw His countenance as the sun that shineth in his strength.” When He appeared to St. Paul

Acts 26. 13. going to Damascus at mid-day, “There was a light above the brightness of the sun shining round about him and them

Heb. 1. 3. that journeyed with him.” And it is no wonder, “for He is the brightness of His Father’s glory, and the express Image of His person;” and therefore must needs shine more gloriously than it is possible for any mere creature to do: His very body, by reason of its union to the Divine

Phil. 3. 21. Person, “is a glorious Body.” The most glorious, doubtless, of all the bodies in the world, as far exceeding the sun as that doth a clod of earth; insomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as He now shines forth in all His glory in the highest Heavens, how would our eyes be dazzled! our whole souls amazed and confounded at His excellent glory! The sun would appear to us no otherwise than as the moon and stars do when the sun is up. And He that so far excels the sun in that very property wherein the sun excels all other things, may well be called the “Sun”—the Sun by way of pre-eminence, the most glorious Sun in the

world, in comparison whereof nothing else deserves to be called by that name. Neither may our blessed Saviour be justly called by this glorious name only for what He is in Himself, but likewise from what He doeth for us; as may be easily demonstrated from all the benefits that we receive from the sun. I shall instance in some of the most plain and obvious.

1. *First*, therefore, the sun, we know, is the fountain of all the light that we have upon earth, without which we could see nothing, not so much as the way that is before us, but should be always groping and stumbling in the dark; whereas by it we can discern every thing that is about us, or at any distance from us, as far as our sight can reach. In which respect our blessed Lord is the Sun indeed, “the John 8. 12. Light of the world;” “the True Light that lighteth every ch. 1. 9: one that cometh into the world;” “a Light to lighten the Luke 2. 32. Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel;” “a mar- 1 Pet. 2. 9. vellous Light,” whereby we can see things that are not visible to the eye as plainly as we do those that are. For this “Day-spring from on high,” this Sun of Righteousness, Luke 1. 78, “hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness 79. and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace;” to shew us the invisible things of God, and direct us to all things belonging to our everlasting peace and happiness. He hath made them all clear and manifest to us in His Gospel. “But whatsoever maketh manifest is Eph. 5. 13. light.” Wherefore He is said to have “brought life and 2 Tim. 1. 10. immortality to light through the Gospel.” Because He hath there so clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of His holy Gospel we may see all things necessary to be known, believed, or done, in order to eternal life, as plainly as we can see the most visible objects at noon-day.

2. By this light we can see as much of the glory of God Himself, as our mortal nature can bear. For “no man hath John 1. 18. seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, Which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” “Neither Matt. 11. 27. knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.” So that no man ever had or can have any right knowledge of the true God, but only by His Son, our Saviour Christ. But by this means

they that lived before might see Him as by twilight ; we who live after this Sun is risen, may see Him by the clearest light that can be given of Him ; for He hath fully revealed and declared Himself to us in the Gospel.

3. By this glorious Light we can see into the mystery of the Eternal Trinity in Unity, so as to believe that God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one, one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at first by His word, and still upholds and orders all things according to His will : that God the Son was made flesh, became man, and, as such, died upon the cross, and so offered up Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world ; that He rose again, went up to Heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God ; that upon our repentance and faith in Him our sins are all pardoned, and He that made us is reconciled to us by the merits of His said death ; that by the power of His intercession, which He now makes in Heaven for us, we are justified or accounted righteous in Him, before His, and in Him our Almighty Father ; that God the Holy Ghost abides continually with His Church, moving upon, actuating, and influencing the means of grace that are there administered ; that He sanctifies all that believe in Christ, leads them into all truth, comforts them in all their troubles, and assists them in doing whatsoever is required of them. These, and many such great and necessary truths, as lay in a great measure hid before, are now, by the light of the Sun of Righteousness shining in His Gospel, made so plain and evident, that all may see them, except they wilfully shut their eyes, or turn their back upon them.

4. And though the sun in the firmament enlightens only the air, to make it a fit medium through which to see ; this glorious light that comes from the Sun of Righteousness

Ps. 119. 18. enlightens men's minds too, and opens their eyes " to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the Law of God."

And that, too, so effectually in some, that they likewise are

Acts 26. 18. able to enlighten others, " to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." Insomuch that they also are the

Matt. 5. 14. " light of the world ;" not originally in themselves, but by communication from Him, as the moon is first enlightened by the sun, and then reflects its light to the earth.

5. Moreover, the sun is the first cause, under God, not only of light, but also of all the life that is in any creature upon earth, without which nothing could live, no, not so much as a vegetable, much less an animal life; for that which we call life, wherewith such creatures as have organs fitted for it are actuated and quickened, so as to be said properly to live, it all depends upon the heat and influence of the sun. Should the sun once cease to be, or to influence the world, all living creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, the Fountain of all spiritual life. "In Thee," saith David, "is the fountain of life, in Thy light shall we see light;" where we see that light and life in this sense also go together; they both proceed from the same Fountain, "the Sun of Righteousness;" Who therefore saith, "I am the Light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," that light which hath life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; so that He is both Light and Life itself. "I am," saith He, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life;" and our Life, as the Apostle calls Him, even the Life of all that believe in Him. "The life that I now live in the flesh," saith the same Apostle, "I live by the faith of the Son of God." "And therefore he who believeth, and so hath the Son, he hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life."

Ps. 36. 9.

John 8. 12.

ch. 14. 6.

Col. 3. 4.

Gal. 2. 20.

1 John 5. 12.

From all which it appears, that "all men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins." But when any arise from the dead by faith, it is Christ that gives them life, "Who came into the world on purpose that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "More abundantly," that is, in the highest and most excellent manner that it is possible for men to live. For this life, which the Sun of Righteousness raises believers to, is the life of righteousness, an holy, an heavenly, a spiritual, divine life; it is the life of faith, whereby they live to other purposes, and in a quite different manner from other men; they live to God, and not unto the world; they live in a constant dependence upon Him, and submission to Him; they live with a firm belief of His Word, and sincere obedience to His Laws; they live altogether in His service, so that "whether they

Eph. 2. 1.

ch. 5. 14.

John 10. 10.

1 Cor. 10. 31.

eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they still do it to the glory of God." In short, they strive all they can to do the will of God upon earth, as the holy Angels do it in Heaven, and so have their conversation there, where their Saviour and their treasure is.

But this life is infused into them only by the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, by that Holy Spirit Which proceedeth from Christ, whereby they, being born again, and made the children of light, thus walk in newness of life: and so it is nourished also, preserved, and strengthened, only by Him, Who therefore calls Himself "the Bread of Life," and "the Bread of God, which cometh from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world;" "the Living Bread, of which if any man eat, he shall live for ever." And this bread which He gives is His flesh, "which He gave for the life of the world." "For His flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed; so that whoso eateth His flesh, and drinketh His blood, hath eternal life, and He will raise him up at the Last Day, that he may live for ever." For Christ is "the Resurrection and the Life; whosoever believeth in Him, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall never die." Though his body may die, yet not his soul: and his body also at the Last Day shall be raised again to life, by the power of this glorious Sun: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Seeing, therefore, that Jesus Christ is the Fountain of the life of righteousness, the Author of that spiritual and eternal life which the righteous live, as the sun is of our natural, He also may most properly be called the Sun of Righteousness, as He is in the words before us. And so He may be likewise from His cheering and refreshing our spirits in the inward man, as the sun does in the outward. "The light of the eyes," saith the wise man, "rejoiceth the heart." "And truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." This we all find by daily experience; and so do we, too, that the light and heat of the sun agitate or move our animal spirits in so benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more cheerful and pleasant when the sun shines clearly than we are in a dark night or

cloudy day. But in this the Sun of Righteousness infinitely exceeds the other, for He is the Fountain not only of some, but of all the true joy and comfort that His faithful people have, or ever can have in the world. It all proceeds from Him, "Whom having not seen, they love; in Whom, though 1 Pet. 1. 8. now they see Him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." For upon their believing in Him, as having been delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification, He manifesteth Himself and His special love and favour to them, in the pardon of their sins, and their reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their souls are filled, not only with unspeakable, but glorious joy, of the same nature with that which the glorified Saints in Heaven are continually transported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance, and His causing His face to shine upon them; when the Sun Ps. 4. 6; 67. 1; 80. 3; Num. 6. 25. of Righteousness thus shineth upon them, refreshing and comforting their hearts, by the sweet influences of that Holy Spirit that proceedeth from Him.

But the sun doth not only refresh the earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by his means, under God, that plants grow and bring forth fruit, and that animals do the respective works which God hath set them. So is Christ the Cause or Author of all the good and righteous works that are done in the world; He Himself saith, "Without Me ye can do John 15. 5. nothing." And His Apostle could say upon his own experience, "I can do all things through Christ Which strength- Phil. 4. 13. eneth me;" and that the fruits, all the fruits, of righteous- ch. 1. 11. ness, are by Jesus Christ, or come from Him; Who therefore in this respect also may well be termed "the Sun of Righteousness."

To which we may likewise add, that as the works which God hath made upon earth by His power, although they have no light in themselves whereby they can be seen, yet they appear in all their beauty and colours by the sun reflecting his light upon them; so the works which His servants do by His assistance and grace, although they have no real worth, nor are exactly righteous in themselves, yet by the Sun of Righteousness reflecting His righteousness upon them, they seem or are accounted righteous in the sight of

1 Pet. 2. 5. God; or, as St. Peter speaks, they are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Without Whom, therefore, there could be no such thing as righteousness seen upon earth, no more than there could be colours without light. But, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," both sincerely righteous in themselves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by His righteousness imputed to them. So that all righteousness, both as it is performed by men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jesus Christ. And this seems to be the great reason wherefore He is here called in a peculiar manner the Sun of Righteousness, and promised to arise to His faithful people "with healing in His wings," that they may grow up as calves in the stalls; to shew that it is by Him only that they are healed of their infirmities, and restored to a sound mind, so as to grow in grace, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness, such righteousness as by him is acceptable to God, from Whom they shall therefore at the Last Day receive the crown of righteousness, that crown which this Sun of Righteousness hath procured for them.

Upon these, among many other accounts, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, may truly be called the Sun of Righteousness, as He is here by the Spirit of truth itself, for our admonition and comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our blessed Saviour, and to exercise our faith in Him, so as to love and honour Him with all our hearts, and to put our whole trust and confidence in Him for all things necessary to our eternal salvation. Forasmuch as we are by this means given to understand, that what the sun is to this lower world, the same is Christ to His Church. But the sun, as we have heard, is the most excellent and most glorious thing that we see in the world. It is the next cause, under God, of all the light that is in the air, and of all the life that any creatures live upon the earth. It is that which refresheth the earth, and makes it fruitful. It is that also which gives a lustre to all things that are about us, so as to make them pleasing and delightful to the eye.

And accordingly, whensoever I think of my blessed Saviour, the Sun of Righteousness, I apprehend, or rather

by the eye of faith I behold, Him in the highest heavens, there shining in glory and splendour infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear, invested with supreme majesty, honour, and authority, over the whole creation. I behold Him there surrounded with an innumerable company of holy Angels, as so many fixed stars, and of glorified Saints as planets enlightened by Him; all His satellites or servants waiting upon Him, ready upon all occasions to reflect and convey His benign influences or favours to His people upon earth. I see him yonder by His Own light, I behold Him displaying His bright beams, and diffusing His light round about, over His whole Church, both that which is triumphant in Heaven, and that which is militant here on earth; that all the members of it may see all things belonging to their peace. I behold Him continually sending down His quickening Spirit upon those who are baptized into and believe in His Holy Name, to regenerate them, to be a standing principle of a new and Divine life in them. I behold Him there manifesting Himself, and causing His face to shine upon those who look up to Him, so as to refresh and cheer their spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to "run with patience the race that is set before them." I Heb. 12. 1. behold Him there continually issuing forth His Holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the administration of His Word and Sacraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in grace, and be fruitful in every good word and work. I behold the Sun of Righteousness shining with so much power and efficacy upon His Church, that all the good works which are done in it, though imperfect in themselves, do notwithstanding appear through Him as good and righteous in the sight of God Himself, and are accordingly rewarded by Him. In short, as the sun was made to rule and govern the day, so I behold this Sun of Righteousness as governing His Church, and ordering all things both within and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God, till He hath brought them all to Himself, to live with Him in the highest Heavens, where they also shall by His means "shine forth as the sun Matt. 13. 43. in the Kingdom of their Father for ever."

Could we keep these and suchlike thoughts of our

blessed Saviour always fresh in our minds; could we be always thus looking upon Him as the Sun of Righteousness shining continually upon us and His whole Church, what holy, what Heavenly, what comfortable lives should we then lead! We should then despise the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, as nothing, as less than nothing, in comparison of this most glorious Sun and His righteousness.

Phil. 3. 8, 9. We should then, with St. Paul, "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, and should count them but dung, that we may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having our own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." We should then leave gazing upon the trifles of this lower world, and should be always looking up to this Sun of Righteousness, so as to be enlightened by Him with such a light as will discover to us the glories of the other world, together with the way that leads to it. We should then abhor and detest the works of darkness, and walk as the children of light, and accordingly shine as lights in the world. And then we should have the light of God's countenance shining continually upon us, enlightening, enlivening, and refreshing our whole souls, and purifying both our hearts and lives, so as to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light; in that everlasting light which comes from the Sun of Righteousness, Who liveth and reigneth, and shineth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever!

[Rom. 13.
12; Eph. 5. 8;
Phil. 2. 15.]

[Col. 1. 12.]

THE GREAT
NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE
OF
PUBLIC PRAYER
AND
FREQUENT COMMUNION,
DESIGNED TO REVIVE
PRIMITIVE PIETY.



THE GREAT
NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE
OF
PUBLIC PRAYER.

Now Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.—ACTS, iii. 1.

FROM your presence here at this time and place, dedicated to the service of the Most High God, I cannot but in charity conclude, that you all believe that He governs the world, and disposes of all things in it, according to His Own will and pleasure; that it is in Him you live, and move, and have your being; that you neither have nor can have any thing but what you receive from Him; and that you are therefore come hither now on purpose to acknowledge His goodness to you in what you have, and to pray unto Him for what you want. And verily you do well to take all the opportunities that ye can get to do so; for this is the way to continue in His love and favour, and to live always under His care and protection. But for that purpose ye must not think it enough to pray to and to praise Him only now and then, when ye have nothing else to do; but this should be your daily business, the constant employment of your lives. He Himself commands you by His Apostle to “pray without ceasing,” and to “pray always,” or “at all times, with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,” and to “watch thereunto with all perseverance.” Not as if ye should do nothing else but pray; but that prayer should run through and accompany every thing else ye do, so as to begin, continue, and end all your actions with praying to and praising

1 Thess. 5.
17.
Eph. 6. 18.

God for His direction and assistance; though not always with your mouths, yet howsoever in your hearts, by lifting them up unto Him, as any man may do, in midst of other business. Thus David praised God seven times a-day.

Ps. 119. 164. "Seven times a-day do I praise Thee," saith he, "because of Thy righteous judgments." Not that he never did it oftener,

but this was the least he ever did it: for, being a man after God's Own heart, his heart was always running upon God, and praying to Him; and that too not only in his mind, but with his mouth also: "I will bless the Lord," saith he, "at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth."

Ps. 34. 1. Ps. 35. 28. "And my tongue shall speak of Thy righteousness and of Thy praise all the day long." Thus all that would live a truly pious and Divine life, must keep their hearts always fixed upon God, admiring His goodness, magnifying His power, and imploring His grace and mercy, not only every day, but every hour of the day, at all times, upon all occasions that offer themselves, as some or other do continually.

But besides our thus praying to and praising God in the midst of other business, we ought to set apart some certain times in every day wholly for this. The saints of old were wont to do it three times a-day, as we learn from Daniel. Dan. 6. 10. For when king Darius had signed a decree, "That whosoever should ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, except of the king, should be cast into the den of lions," it is written, that "when Daniel knew that the decree was signed, he went into his house, and his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees, three times a-day, and prayed, and gave thanks unto his God, as he did aforetime." "As he did aforetime:" which shews that this had been his constant practice before, and he would not leave it off now, though he was sure to be cast into the den of lions for it. But what times of the day these were that were anciently devoted to this religious purpose, we may best gather from king David, where he saith, Ps. 55. 17. "Evening and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice." He begins with the evening, because day then began, according to the Jewish account; but he observed all these times of prayer alike; and so, questionless, did other devout people as well as he.

The Jews have a tradition that those times were ordained to that use,—the morning by Abraham, noon by Isaac, and evening by Jacob. But whether they have any ground for that or not, be sure this custom is so reasonable and pious, that the Church of Christ took it up and observed it all along from the very beginning. Only to distinguish these times more exactly, the Christians called them (as the Jews also had done before) by the names of the third, the sixth, and the ninth hours. Of which Tertullian saith, “Tres istas horas ut insigniores in rebus humanis ita et solenniores fuisse in orationibus divinis,” ‘as they were more famous than others in human affairs, so they were more solemn in Divine prayers.’

[Basnage, Hist. of Jews, lib. v. c. xv. 3. Trans.]

Tertull. de Jejun. c. 10, vol. i. p. 708. c. Ed. Rigalt.

I know that the primitive Christians performed their private devotions at other times as well as these; but at these set times every day, especially at the third and ninth hours, they always performed them publicly, if they could get an opportunity. And if we would be such Christians as they were, we must follow their pious example in this as well as in other things. This, therefore, is that which by God’s assistance I would now persuade you all to; and for that purpose have chosen these words for the subject of my present discourse, as setting before you the example of two of Christ’s Own Apostles in it, St. Peter and St. John, of whom it is here said, that “they went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.”

The Holy Spirit of God, by His amanuensis St. Luke, is here about to describe a great miracle wrought upon a man who was above forty years old, and had been lame from his mother’s womb, whom St. Peter made perfectly sound and whole, only by saying, “In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!” And he begins it with telling us, “that Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer.” But what is this to the purpose? Would it not have been sufficient to have described this as he usually doth other miracles, without such minute circumstances of time and place? Yes, certainly, it would have been so. And therefore I can see no reason why this should be recorded, but only to teach us,

that though the Levitical Law expired together with our Saviour, yet the public worship of God ought still to be kept up at certain times and places set apart for it. For here we see two great Apostles, the one called the "first," the other the "beloved" disciple; these two, when endued with a more than ordinary measure of the Holy Ghost, did not think it enough to pray at home, or together with their brethren in any private house; but they went to the place that was dedicated to the public worship of God, and at the time when that worship was then performed. And this is left upon record, that Christians of all ages may know it, and learn, by their Apostolical example, to lay hold on all opportunities they can get of performing their public devotions to Almighty God in such places and at such times as are appointed for that purpose.

For our better understanding of this, we shall consider two things; First, the place whither these Apostles went; they went up to the Temple: and then the time when they went; "at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour."

I. First, they went up into the Temple, εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, "to the holy place," as the word signifies, to the place dedicated to holy uses, to the service of the Most Holy God. Such places God always had upon earth, and He always looked upon them as His Own in a peculiar manner. Though "the earth" be "the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," or, every thing that is in it; yet when any part of it is solemnly devoted to Him, and to the worship of His Holy Name, He takes possession of it for Himself, as He did in a visible manner both of the Tabernacle and Temple.

And, from that time forward, He hath a new kind of propriety in such places, distinct from that which He had before, and reckons them His Own in a more special sense than other places are. He Himself, as well as others, calls them His: as where He saith, "In that ye have brought into My sanctuary strangers uncircumcised in heart and flesh, to be in My sanctuary, to pollute it, even My house." "My house shall be called a house of prayer;" and so He frequently saith, "That this house was called by His Name, or His Name was called upon in it," as Jer. vii. 10; xi. 14.

[Ps. 24. 1;
1 Cor. 10.
26.]

Ezck. 44. 7.

Is. 56. 7.

And in all places thus dedicated to Him and called by His Name, He Himself hath promised that He will be present in a special manner to bestow His blessings upon those who there sincerely call upon Him. "In all places," saith He, Exod. 20. 24. "where I record My Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." The truth of which promise God's faithful people have had experience of in all ages; and therefore always accounted it to be their interest as well as duty to frequent such places as often as they could. As we see in David, a man after God's Own heart. What pleasure did he take in going to the house of God! "I was glad," saith Ps. 122. 1. he, "when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." How happy did he esteem those who could be always there! "Blessed is the man," saith he to God, Ps. 65. 4. "whom Thou choosest and causest to approach unto Thee, that he may dwell in Thy courts; he shall be satisfied with the goodness of Thy house, even of Thy Holy Temple." How doth he long to communicate with them in it! "How Ps. 84. 1, 2. amiable," saith he, "are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh crieth out for the Living God." How doth he envy the very birds that come into the house of God, when he himself, being then in exile, could not! "Yea, the sparrow," saith he, "hath found a house, and ver. 3. the swallow a nest where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God." How doth he prefer this before all the pleasures of the world besides! "For a day in Thy courts," saith he, "is ver. 10. better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." There are many such places in the Psalms, which shew the great love and honour he had for the house of God, and the extraordinary comfort and delight that he used to find there.

Thus also Daniel, when he was at Babylon, although the Dan. 6. 10. house of God was then destroyed and not yet rebuilt, yet in his daily devotions "he opened the windows of his chamber towards Jerusalem," that he might look at least towards the place where the house of God once stood, and so expressed his earnest desire to worship God there, and his

faith in the promises which God had made to those who did so; and by that means, when he could not possibly do it any other way, he made his private devotions in a manner public, joining in his soul with the whole Church of God in his public worship, when he could not do it in his body.

But not to mention any more of the many instances of this kind in the Old Testament, in the New it is written, Luke 2. 37. that "Anna the prophetess departed not from the Temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day." ver. 27. It is written, that old "Simeon," that just and devout man, "came by the Spirit into the Temple." It is written, that Jesus "Himself went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought, saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves. And He taught daily in ch. 19. 45-47. the Temple." ch. 24. 52, 53. It is written of the Apostles, that "when they had seen Christ ascend to Heaven, they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God." It is written of all the Disciples, that "they, continuing daily Acts 2, 46, 47. in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people." It is written ch. 22. 17. particularly of St. Paul, "that when he was come to Jerusalem, even while he was praying in the Temple, he was in a trance." And it is written here of St. Peter and St. John, that "they went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer."

But wherefore are these things written, but for our admonition; to teach us that it is God's will and pleasure that we should perform public devotions to Him, in places dedicated to His service, and set apart wholly for that purpose? Such as the Temple was at Jerusalem, which therefore was called "a house of prayer" by God Himself; yea, "His house of prayer." "And I will make them joyful," saith He, "in My house of prayer," which plainly shews both that prayer was the most proper work of that house, and also that house the most proper place for prayer, as being His Own house, where He Himself was pleased in a more especial manner to reside, and to distribute His blessings among those who

Isa. 56. 7;
Luke 19. 46.
Isa. 56. 7.

there prayed unto Him for them. Hence, whatsoever was done in this house, is said to be done before God, as there specially present; and when our blessed Lord in His infancy was first brought to the Temple, it is said, "they brought Him thither to present Him to the Lord." Where we may observe, by the way, that this one place of Scripture, duly considered, would be sufficient to persuade all Christian parents to have their children baptized, not in their own but in God's house, that they may be there presented to the Lord, as Christ was, and so receive His blessing, according to the prayers which are there made for them in God's Own house, in His house of prayer, "where He Himself hath promised to meet with them, and to bless them." By virtue of which promise the people of God, in all ages, have found their common and public prayers to be the most effectual.

Eccl. 5. 1, 2;
Jer. 7. 10,
&c.
Luke 2. 22.

Ex. 20. 24.

There they have greater assistance of God's Holy Spirit, stronger assurances of His love and favour to them, a clearer sight of His glory and goodness, and a deeper sense of His special presence with them, grounded upon their belief of that remarkable saying of our blessed Saviour, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." He doth not only promise that He will be there, but He positively asserts that He will be there in the midst of them; which they who meet together in His Name cannot but believe, with such a faith as is "the evidence of things not seen," and therefore by it they see Him there as really as they see themselves, or one another. And this is that which makes them so desirous of being in such places, as we see in David, saying, "O God, Thou art my God, early will I seek Thee; my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth after Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the Sanctuary." It seems he had seen God in the Sanctuary, or holy place, before, and therefore longs to go thither again, not doubting but if he was there he should see God again, as he used to do. And so do all His faithful people. They see Him there by faith in His Word; they see Him by the light of His countenance, which He lifts up there upon them. They see Him shining forth in His glory, and manifesting Himself and His goodness to them

Matt. 18. 20.

Heb. 11. 1.

Ps. 63. 1, 2.

in hearing the prayers, and accepting the praises, they offer to Him in His Name, Who is in the midst of them, and
 John 16. 23. hath promised, that “ whatsoever they shall ask the Father in His Name, He will give it.”

These things, I confess, may seem strange to some, especially to such as have not made trial of them; but they who have accustomed themselves to perform their public devotions to Almighty God, with that intention of mind, with that earnestness of desire, with that faith, with that reverence and humility, as they ought, they know that all which I have said comes far short of what they sometimes experience. Be sure, it was not for nothing that the Apostles, in my text, went up to the “ Temple at the hour of prayer,” to pray there; as all devout people that dwelt thereabout were wont to do; and they also that would but seem to be so; as appears from our Saviour’s Parable, where
 Luke 18. 10. He saith, “ Two men went up into the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a publican.” For this shews, that not only they, but Christ Himself, esteemed that the most proper place for prayer.

I say the most, not the only proper place. It was at the Temple only that all the sacrifices were offered, which typified and represented the death of Christ, by which alone our prayers are heard and our duties accepted. And, therefore, that was the most proper place for all that lived near it, and could go thither to perform their daily devotions, because there they had the most sensible occasions given for the exercise of their faith in Christ, there typically represented before their eyes, as dying for their sins, and as making intercession for them, with the incense of His Own merits. But, nevertheless, there were many other places appointed for public prayers, which were called Synagogues. There were reckoned at one time above four hundred in Jerusalem itself, and several others in every city of Judea, and where-soever else any Jews dwelt; so that in every place where there were ten considerable Jews together, they were bound to have a synagogue; which were, therefore, so many parish churches belonging to the Temple as the cathedral: or rather they were as our chapels of ease to the mother Church. For as there are many parishes in England, where

[Basnage,
 Hist. of
 Jews, lib. v.
 cap. iv. 5.]

there are several chapels of ease, where people may perform their public prayers, but they are bound to go to the mother Church to receive the Holy Sacrament; so, notwithstanding the many synagogues which they had in all the parts of their kingdom, the Jews were to offer their sacrifices only at the Temple. And, therefore, that was properly the metropolitical or mother Church; and all the synagogues, far and near, were members of that; and as such, were houses of God, and houses of prayer, as that was; and the prayers which were made in them were as acceptable to God as those which were made in the Temple itself.

There were such places as these in David's time: for he, speaking prophetically of the destruction of that nation, saith, "They have burnt up all the synagogues," or houses Ps. 74. 8. "of God in the land." To the same purpose is that of the Prophet Jeremiah, "He hath violently taken away His Lam. 2. 6. tabernacle, as if it were a garden; He hath destroyed His places of the assembly." In both which places we see God's propriety asserted in these synagogues, as well as in the Temple. They are called the houses of God, and His places of assembly. The original word in both places is *מִוֶּעֶד*, the same that is used for the tabernacle of the congregation, or "the tabernacle of meeting," as the word signifies; so called, not only because the people met there, but chiefly because God met there with the people, as God Himself assures us; saying, "In the tabernacle of the congregation," Exod. 25, 22; 29. 42; 30. 36. or meeting, "where I will meet with thee." From whence it appears that these synagogues also, as called by the same name, were places where God met with His people, and bestowed His blessings upon them. And that is the reason that the Prophets complain so much of this, as one of the greatest calamities that could befall a nation, that the houses of God should be burnt and destroyed; so that they had no such public and solemn places left where they could meet with Him: hence also it was that the Jews esteemed the building a synagogue to be so good a work, and so great a kindness to them, as appears from their elders commending the centurion to our Saviour, as a person worthy of His favour upon that account; for say they, "he loveth Luke 7. 5. our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." And

hence, lastly, it is, that we so often read in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, that Christ Himself and His Apostles went as constantly into the synagogues when they were in the country as they went to the Temple when they were at Jerusalem; those being the most proper places, not only for prayer, but likewise for the preaching and hearing God's Holy Word, which was "read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day."

Acts 15. 21.

These things I thought good to put you in mind of at this time, that you might know how great a value the Church and people of God, in ancient times, set upon places devoted to Him, and might learn from thence to do so too; for our churches now are as solemnly dedicated to the service of God, and therefore are as much His houses, His houses of prayer, as ever the Jewish synagogues were, or the Temple itself. The very name "church," in Greek, from whence it comes, signifies "the Lord's house." And it cannot be imagined by any Christian, but that God hath as much propriety in, and as much respect unto, His houses now as He ever had. It is true, we have not such sacrifices offered in our churches as were in the Temple; but we have One which answers the ends of all these sacrifices, and far exceeds them all together, even the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, instituted and celebrated in memory of the death of the Lamb of God, which, by the legal sacrifices, was only foreshewed and typified. And whereas then sacrifices were offered only in one place, at the Temple in Jerusalem, not in any of their synagogues; the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood is administered not only in our cathedrals, but in all our parish churches. And it being only by virtue of that blood which was only "typified" in theirs, but is "commemorated" in our churches, that our prayers are heard, our services accepted, or any of God's promises are ever fulfilled to us; we cannot doubt but that all the promises which he made of meeting and blessing his people in such places, were intended for, and belong to, us and to our churches, as much as ever they did to any: and by consequence that it is both our duty and interest to go to our respective churches, as the two great Apostles did to the Temple at the hour of prayer.

II. And that is the other thing which I promised to consider in these words,—the time when these Apostles went up together into the Temple: they went at “the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour;” that is, at three o’clock in the afternoon: for the Jews divided the day from sun-rising to sun-setting into “twelve hours;” and therefore, according to their account, the time of the sun’s rising, about six o’clock, was their first hour; their third hour was our nine o’clock in the morning; and their ninth hour three in the afternoon. And these two last, even the third and the ninth hours, or, according to our account, nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, were their constant hours of prayer every day in the year. But to understand how they came to be so, we must first observe, that in the old Law God commanded two lambs to be offered upon the altar every day as a continual burnt-offering: “The one lamb,” saith He, “thou shalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou shalt offer at evening;” or, as it is in the Hebrew, בֵּין הָעֶרְבָּיִם, ‘between the two evenings,’ or about the midst between noon and sun-set, which was, according to their reckoning, the ninth hour. This we may learn from Josephus, the best Jewish writer that is extant, where he saith that the solemn sacrifices were offered twice a-day, πρῶτὴ τε καὶ περὶ ἑννιάτην ὥραν, ‘in the morning, and about the ninth hour.’ And so the Talmudists tell us, that the daily evening sacrifice was killed at half an hour past eight, and offered upon the altar after nine. These, therefore, were the two set hours for the continual burnt-offerings every day; three in the morning, which is our nine; and nine, which is our three in the afternoon.

John 11. 9.

Exod. 29.
39; Num.
28. 4.

Josephus,
Antiq. l.
xiv. c. 4.
[al. 8.] § 3.

These two hours being appointed by God Himself for the daily sacrifice, there was, doubtless, great reason for it, which seems to be this: these, as all the bloody sacrifices, were offered up only as types and representatives of that grand sacrifice which Christ the Lamb of God was to offer for the sins of the world: and therefore they were appointed at the same hours wherein His death was begun, as I may so speak, and finished. About the third hour, or nine in the morning, he was delivered to Pilate, accused, examined, and condemned to die; and therefore the morning sacrifice was

Matt. 27.
45, 46, 50.

appointed at that hour. About the sixth hour, or noon, this Lamb of God was laid upon the altar of the cross, and at the ninth hour expired; as we learn from St. Matthew, saying, "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour; and about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!* My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me! and having cried again with a loud voice, He yielded up the ghost." And this I verily believe was the reason that the evening sacrifice every day was appointed to be offered up at the ninth hour, that so the very time of Christ's suffering might be foreshewn and typified by it, as the place also was; it being absolutely forbidden to offer up any such sacrifices after the Temple was built, any where else but only at Jerusalem, where Christ was to suffer.

Luke 1. 9,
10.

Now, to bring this nearer to our present purpose, we must further observe, that in all these continual burnt-offerings, when the lamb was laid upon the altar, a priest with a censer took some of the coals from off that altar, and carried them into the holy place, where he put incense upon them, and so offered it upon the golden altar before the veil, made for that purpose. This took up some considerable time, usually about half an hour: all which time the people were at their devotions, worshipping, and praying, and praising God; as appears from St. Luke himself, who, speaking of Zacharias, the father of St. John the Baptist, saith, "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." This, therefore, was their time of prayer; and it was the most proper time that could be for it, while the lamb was burning upon the altar without, as a type of the death of Christ; and the sweet incense was burning within the holy place, upon coals taken from thence, to put them in mind of His intercession which He makes by virtue of that death He suffered for them, that their prayers might be heard, and their services accepted, before God. All which was represented in a vision to St.

Rev. 8. 3, 4. John, when he "saw seven angels which stood before God; and another angel (which was Christ the Mediator) came

and stood at the altar, having a golden censer ; and there was given unto Him much incense, that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand."

For hereby is plainly signified, that God smells a sweet savour in the prayers of His people, or accepts of them, only upon the account of the merits of the death of Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, and by means of His Mediation for them, typified by the sweet incense burning upon coals taken from the altar whereupon the lamb was offered, at the same time that the people were at their devotions, and so ascending up together with them into Heaven, and there rendering them acceptable unto God. The same is intimated also by St. Peter, where, speaking to the Saints of God, he saith, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a ¹ Pet. 2. 5. spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Where, as our prayers, and the other services which we perform to Him, are called sacrifices, in allusion to, but spiritual to distinguish them from, those under the Law ; so they are said to be acceptable to God, not in themselves but by Jesus Christ, — by Jesus Christ perfuming them with the spiritual incense of His Own merits, and so making them a sweet savour to the Lord, as it was typically expressed in the Law.

Lev. 2.9, &c.

By this, therefore, we may see how the third and ninth hours of the day, or, as we speak, nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, came to be their chief set hours for prayer every day ; even because at these hours the daily sacrifices were offered, and the holy incense burnt, as types of Christ's death and intercession, whereby alone their prayers could go up as a memorial before God, and be well-pleasing to Him. For this cause, therefore, these were their constant hours of prayer, not only at the Temple in Jerusalem, but in their synagogues also all the country over, devout people daily resorting thither at the said hours to perform their devotions, that so they might both keep up their communion with the Church at Jerusalem, and like-

wise communicate in the sacrifices and incense, which were there offered at these hours, or rather in what was signified by them for God's acceptance of what they did. But they who dwelt at Jerusalem, usually went to the Temple itself at the foresaid hours. And that is the reason that there were

Acts 2. 15. so many "gathered together there upon the day of Pentecost, at the third hour of the day," as St. Peter saith, that

ver. 41. "three thousand of them were there converted to the faith of Christ." And there were as many, or more, there at the ninth hour, when St. Peter and St. John went thither together, as appears in that there were "above five thousand at that time converted."

ch. 4. 4.

But how many soever were there besides, be sure these two great Apostles went together "into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour:" not now out of any respect to the sacrifices which were still continued to be offered by the unbelieving Jews; for the Apostles knew well enough that all the laws about them expired upon the death of Christ, so that now all such sacrifices could signify nothing at all. But they went to the Temple, as it was a house of prayer, — a duty that always was, and always must be, performed unto God. "And they went at the ninth hour, because it was the hour of prayer." It had been so for many ages, and there was no reason why it should be now laid aside; God Himself had appointed it for the time of the evening sacrifice, because Christ, the grand sacrifice of the world, was to be offered up at that time. And though the virtue of the legal sacrifice was now ceased, yet the reason why that time was appointed for it still continued; there being as much reason why Christ's death should be commemorated by our Christian sacrifice, as there was that it should be foreshewn and typified by the legal, about the time it happened: at least there was no reason to the contrary. And therefore, that being the usual time for public prayers in the place where they then were, they went up together into the Temple at that hour to perform their devotions. And it is left upon record that they did so, as I observed before, on purpose that the Church, in all ages, might learn by their example to set apart some certain times every day in the year for public prayer. And, accordingly,

as the Jewish Church had by God's Own appointment the morning and evening sacrifice every day in the year, so all Christian Churches have been used to have their morning and evening prayers publicly performed every day; as might easily be shewn out of the records of the Church from the beginning of Christianity. [Exod. 29. 38-40.]

Not to insist upon other Churches, I shall instance at present only in our own, which, as in all things else, so particularly in this, is exactly conformable to the Catholic and Apostolic Church. In the first book of Common Prayer, made by our Church at the beginning of the Reformation, there was a form composed both for morning and evening prayer: the title of that for the morning ran thus, "An Order for Matins daily through the Year," and of that for the evening, "An Order for Even Song throughout the Year;" and accordingly there were psalms and chapters appointed both for the morning and evening of every day. About three or four years after the same book was revised and put forth again. And then the Church taking notice that daily prayers had been in some places neglected, at the end of the preface she added two new rules, or, as we call them, "rubrics," which are still in force, as you may see in the Common Prayer books which we now use.

The first is this:

And all priests and deacons are to say daily the morning and evening prayer, either privately or openly, not being let by sickness, or other urgent cause.

By this, every one that is admitted into holy orders, although he be neither parson, vicar, nor curate of any particular place, yet he is bound to say both morning and evening prayer every day, either in some church or chapel where he can get leave to do it, or else in the house where he dwells, except he be hindered by some such cause which the ordinary of the place judges to be reasonable and urgent.

The other order is this:

And the curate that ministereth in every parish church or chapel, being at home, and not being otherwise reasonably

hindered, shall say the same in the parish church or chapel where he ministereth, and shall cause a bell to be tolled thereunto, a convenient time before he begin, that people may come to hear God's Word, and pray with him.

Here we have a plain and express command, that the curate, whether he be the incumbent himself, or another procured by him to do it, whosoever it is that ministereth God's Holy Word and Sacraments in any parish church or chapel in England, shall say the same morning and evening prayer daily in the parish church or chapel where he ministereth, and shall take care that a bell be tolled a convenient time before he begins, that people having notice of it may come to God's house to hear His Holy Word read, and to join with the minister in performing their public devotions to Him. This every curate or minister in England is bound to do every day in the year, if he be at home, and be not otherwise reasonably hindered. And whether any hindrance be reasonable or no, the minister himself is not the ordinary judge: for in all such cases that is referred by the common laws of the Church to the bishop of the diocese, or the ordinary of the place where he ministereth.

The law hath made this the duty of every minister, and the bishop or ordinary is to see he doeth it; and whether any have reasonable cause ever to omit it, or whether the cause they pretend for it be reasonable or no; this is left by the law to him. He may allow or disallow of the pretence, as he upon the full hearing of it shall see good; and may punish with the censures of the Church any minister within his jurisdiction that doth not read the prayers of the Church, or take care they be read, every morning and evening in the year, except at such times when the minister can prove that he had such a reasonable hindrance or impediment as will justify him before God and His Church.

This care hath our Church taken, that public prayers be read every morning and evening throughout the year in every parish within her bounds, that all who live in her communion may, after the example of the Apostles in my text, go every day into the temple or church at "the hour of prayer." She hath not appointed the hour when either

morning or evening prayer shall begin, because the same hour might not be so convenient in all places: so that in some places it might be pretended that there was a reasonable hindrance, that it could not be done just at the time. Wherefore, to prevent any such plea, and to make the duty as easy and practicable, both to the minister and people, as it could be, the Church hath left that to the ministers themselves, who, considering every one his own and his people's circumstances, may and ought to appoint such hours both for morning and evening prayer in their respective places, as they in their discretion shall judge to be most convenient. Only they ought to take care, in general, that morning prayers be always read before, and the evening after, noon. And it is very expedient that the same hours be every day, as much as it is possible, observed in the same place, that people, knowing it beforehand, may order their affairs so as to be ready to go to the Church at the hour of prayer.

But notwithstanding this great care that our Church hath taken to have daily prayers in every parish, we see by sad experience they are shamefully neglected all the kingdom over; there being very few places where they have any public prayers upon the week-days, except, perhaps, upon Wednesdays and Fridays, because it is expressly commanded that the Litany be read upon those days; but it is as expressly commanded that both morning and evening prayers be read every day in the week, as the Litany upon those. And why this commandment should be neglected more than the other, for my part I can see no reason. But I see plain enough that it is a great fault, a plain breach of the known laws of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and particularly of that part of it which by His blessing is settled among us. But where doth this fault lie? I hope not in the clergy. For I dare not suppose or imagine, but that every minister in England, that hath the care of souls committed to him, would be willing and glad to read the prayers every day for their edification, if the people could be persuaded to come to them. I am sure there is never a minister but is obliged to read them daily; and never a parish in England but where the people may have them so read if they will; for they may require it by the laws both of our Church and

State, except at such times when their minister is reasonably hindered from the execution of his office, in the sense before explained.

But the mischief is, men cannot, or rather will not be persuaded to it. They think it a great matter to come to church upon the Lord's day, when they cannot openly follow their particular callings if they would. Upon other days they have other business to mind of greater consequence, as they think, than going to prayers. To some it is a great disturbance to hear the bell sounding in their ears, and calling them to their duty, which they being resolved not to practise, it makes them very uneasy to be so often put in mind of it. Others can make a shift to bear that pretty well, as not looking upon themselves as concerned in it; for they take it for granted that prayers were intended only for such as have nothing else to do. As for their parts, they have a great deal of work upon their hands, and must mind that, without troubling their heads about any thing else. This is the plain case of some, but not of all. Blessed be God, He hath opened the eyes of many, especially in this city, who now see the things that belong to their everlasting peace, and therefore are as constant at their public devotions as they are at their private business. And I trust in His infinite goodness and mercy, that He Who hath begun so good a work among us, will one day perfect it, that we may all meet together with one heart and with one mouth to pray unto Him, and praise and glorify His great Name every day in the week, both in this city and in all the kingdom over. What a happy city, what a glorious kingdom would it then be! and how happy should I think myself if it would please God to make me, the unworthiest of all His servants, an instrument in His Almighty hand towards the effecting of it in this place. It is too great a felicity for me to flatter myself with the least hopes of. Howsoever, I must do my duty, and leave the issue to Him Who hath the hearts of all men in His hand; and therefore, in His Name, shall lay some such plain and obvious considerations before you, which I hope, by His blessing, may prevail upon all here present to follow the Holy Apostles in my text, in going together into the house of God "at the hour of prayer."

For this purpose I might first shew the excellency and usefulness of the prayers which our Church hath appointed to be read every morning and evening. But having already offered at something towards that upon another occasion, I shall here only premise in general, that they are such, both for the language, the matter, the method, and the manner of performing them, that, to speak with the least, there never was, that we know of, nor is at this day, a better or more proper form of public devotions prescribed and used in any part of Christ's Church militant here on earth; there being nothing wanting in them that can any way conduce to the ends for which they are designed, even to the setting forth of God's glory, and to the edifying of His people. There we confess our sins to God, and have His pardon and absolution of them declared to us, being penitent, by one of His Own ministers. There we praise and magnify His glorious Name in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. There we have some part of His Holy Word read, and so His Divine will made known to us. There we pray for all things necessary both for life and godliness; for whatsoever we can want or desire to make us happy in this world and in the next. And all this we there do in such a solemn and reverent manner as becomes the work we are about; insomuch that if it be not our own fault, we can never go to church but we shall return better than we went. Which if all people were but as sensible of as some are, we should not need to use any arguments to persuade them to frequent our public prayers as oft as possibly they can. But it is impossible they should ever know what advantage it would be to them, unless they first make trial of it.

Which, therefore, that I may, by God's assistance, persuade all here present for the future to do, I desire you to consider, first, that He Himself that made you hath sufficiently declared it to be His will and pleasure that you should perform public devotions to Him twice a-day, morning and evening, in that He expressly required and commanded his ancient Church and people, the children of Israel, to do so. For, as I have shewn, He commanded them to sacrifice two lambs every day, one in the morning, and the other in the evening, or afternoon; which was

[Exod. 29.
38-40.]

the same in effect, as to command them to perform their public devotions to Him twice every day. For such were the sacrifices unto them. Not only because, by offering up such sacrifices to Him, in obedience to His command, they publicly acknowledged His supreme authority and power over all things; but likewise because, together with their sacrifices, they always offered up, as they were bound, their prayers and praises to Him. For they never sacrificed but they prayed at the same time, and esteemed no prayers so effectual as those which were joined with sacrifices; as appears from several places of Scripture, where we read,

Gen. 12. 7. that "Abraham built an altar unto the Lord, and called
 ch. 26. 25. upon the Name of the Lord;" and so did Isaac. He first built an altar, whereon to offer his sacrifice, and then prayed.

1 Sam. 7. 9. And of Samuel it is said, that "he took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord; and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him." And when Samuel had blamed Saul for offering a burnt-offering before the time that he came to him, according to his promise, Saul, to excuse himself said, "I said the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made my supplication unto the Lord. I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering." Where he speaks as if offering his sacrifice, and making his "supplication unto the Lord," was one and the same thing; not that it was so in itself, as some have thought, but because that sacrifice was so necessary to make his prayer acceptable unto God, that he could not do one without the other; he could not pray, as he thought, effectually without a burnt-offering. There are many such places in the Old Testament, from whence it might be proved, that sacrifices and prayers always went together; neither are there some wanting in the New. As in the place which I mentioned

ch. 13. 12. before upon another occasion, where it is said, that "the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." For the time of incense was while the sacrifice was burning upon the altar, and therefore that was the time of their public prayers. But I need not have gone from my text to have proved this. For "the ninth hour" is here called the hour of prayer; but that, as I have proved

Luke, 1. 10.

already, was the hour of the evening sacrifice, which puts it beyond all doubt that their daily sacrifices were always accompanied in course with public prayers and devotions. And that is the reason why the Temple, where the sacrifices were offered, was called "an house of prayer" as well as the "house of sacrifice." Yea, it is much oftener called by that name than it is by this; prayer being the duty principally required there, and sacrifice only for the sake of that, to make way for it to go up as a memorial before God, and to be well-pleasing to Him; not as if there was any such virtue in the blood of the lamb, or in flesh smoking upon the altar, but by means of the typical relation which it had to Christ, "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world;" by Whom alone our prayers are acceptable unto God, as I observed before. 2 Sam. 7. 12. [John 1. 29.]

Wherefore, seeing God was pleased to command that sacrifices should be offered twice a-day, to accompany and assist His people's devotions, there was plainly something moral, as well as Levitical, in that command. As it respected the sacrifices, it was purely Levitical, and therefore to cease at our Saviour's death: but, as it respected the people's devotions, it was moral, and of perpetual obligation. People always were, and always will be, bound to offer up their prayers and thanksgivings unto God; and this, as being a moral duty, was even in those days reckoned the more acceptable sacrifice of the two. "I will praise the Name of God," saith David, "with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving; this also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." Ps. 69. 30, 31. And therefore, when God commanded the less, it cannot be imagined but that He required the more principal duty, even public prayers and praises to be offered to Him twice a-day; as the Jews plainly understood it: as appears, in that they had their daily prayers as constantly as their daily sacrifices, and that too at the same times when God commanded them to be offered, even every morning and evening, which they would not have had, if they had not looked upon themselves as obliged by that command to pray as well as to sacrifice at those times.

But surely, to pray to God, and to praise His Holy Name,

Heb. 13. 15.

which make up our public devotions, is a duty as much incumbent upon Christians as ever it was upon the Jews. It is our only daily sacrifice which we offer unto God, in the Name of His Son: "By Him therefore," saith the Apostle, "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks unto His Name." This is now to be our continual sacrifice; and though we do not offer up a lamb to God, together with our devotions every day, yet we present that to Him which is of more worth and value than what the Jews offered. They presented the shadow, we the substance: they offered a lamb as a type of Christ to come, we offer up our prayers to God, in the Name of Christ Himself, as already sacrificed for us, and as presenting our prayers to His Father with the incense of His Own merits. Whilst they prayed, Christ's death and intercession for them were only typically represented by a lamb burning upon one, and incense upon another altar. But in all our prayers we actually name Him as the Person by Whose alone merits and Mediations our prayers can be accepted, concluding every Collect with saying, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' or something to that purpose.

By which means we have better ground and clearer occasion also given us to trust in God, for His acceptance of our devotions, than they had, and therefore ought certainly to be as constant as they were in the performance of them, otherwise we can expect no other but that they will rise up against us in judgment at the Last Day; neither do I see what we can answer, or plead for ourselves. For God having once commanded that sacrifices should be offered to Him every morning and evening in the year, He thereby plainly signified, that it is His Divine will and pleasure, that His people, in all ages, should do something twice every day, whereby to make their public acknowledgments of His absolute dominion over them, and of His infinite goodness and mercy to them. But this we cannot do now any other way, but by praying to Him; and praising and magnifying His most glorious Name in a public and solemn manner, which we are therefore doubtless bound to do, or at least to take all opportunities that we can get of doing it twice every day.

And indeed, Christ Himself doth in effect require the same thing of us; for, that it is His pleasure, that we should constantly use that form of prayer which He, as our great Lord and Master, was pleased to compose for all His Disciples, is so plain that I wonder how any can doubt of it; there being no command in all the Bible more plain than that, “When ye pray, say, Our Father, Which art in Heaven,” &c. But it is as plain that He designed this prayer should be used publicly and in common by His Disciples, when met together in their public assemblies. In that He hath drawn it up all along in the plural number, that many may join together in it, and say, “Our Father, Which art in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us: and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” So that there is not one petition, nor one expression in it, but what a whole congregation may jointly use. From whence St. Cyprian truly observed, that this is “*publica et communis oratio*,” ‘a public and common prayer.’ Not but that it may, and ought to be used also privately, by every single Christian apart by himself; because every Christian is a member of Christ’s Catholic Church, and should pray as such in private as well as in public; and for all his fellow-members as well as for himself, they being all but one body. But, however, it must be acknowledged, that it being so exactly fitted to a public congregation, it was primarily and chiefly intended for that purpose. And that our Saviour would have us say this prayer every day, appears most plainly from that petition in it, “Give us this day our daily bread.” For this shews, that as we depend upon God every day for our necessary food, so we ought to pray unto Him every day for it. And if we must put up this petition every day, we must put up all the rest with it; for Christ hath joined them altogether, and therefore we must not put them asunder. Neither is there any part of the prayer but what is as necessary to be said every day as this.

Luke 11. 2.

[De Orat. Dom. p.141, ed. Oxon.]

Wherefore, seeing our blessed Saviour Himself was most graciously pleased to compose this prayer, so as to suit it to our daily public devotions, and hath plainly commanded us to use it, according as He had composed it; we may reasonably from thence infer, that it is His Divine will and plea-

[John 16.
13; 14. 26.]

sure that we should publicly pray to our Heavenly Father every day, as His Church had all along before done it, morning and evening. Be sure His Apostles thought so, when they had received His Holy Spirit, to “lead them,” according to His promise, “into all truth,” and to “bring into their remembrance all things that He had said unto them.” For after the day of Pentecost, on which the Holy Ghost came upon them, the next news that we hear of any of them, is, that “Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour,” or the hour of “evening prayer;” which they would not have done, if they had not believed it to be agreeable to the doctrine which He had taught them.

And if there was no Divine revelation for it, our own natural reason might teach us the same thing. For, seeing we depend continually upon God, and every day receive fresh mercies from Him; there is all the reason in the world that we should every day, some way or other, testify our acknowledgment that we do so. For that is all that we can do to Him, for all that He doeth for us. We cannot give Him any thing, for we have nothing but what He gives us. And therefore He expects nothing from us, for all the favours He is pleased to shew us, but only to own that they come from Him, and to shew we do so, by all such means and methods as He for that purpose hath prescribed to us. Of which, the performance of public devotions was always reckoned the most plain and proper. I say public, for what we do in private, none in the world knows but God and ourselves. But by performing our public devotions to Him, we demonstrate to the world, that we believe and acknowledge that He is the Supreme Governor and Disposer of all things in it; that it is in Him we live, and move, and have our being; and that we neither have, nor can have any thing but what we receive from Him. By our praising Him for what we have, we own that it was He Who gave it; and by praying to Him for what we want, we own it is He alone Who can give it to us. And by doing this publicly, we shew that we are not ashamed to own it, nor care if all the world knows that we have nothing of our own; nothing but what we receive from God, and wish that all others would join with us, and assist us in praising of Him, and in praying to

Him, both for themselves, and for us too. This is properly to serve God, and glorify Him in the world: the great work we were made for, and for which we are still supported and maintained by Him. So that by this means we may so far answer the end of our creation, and the end of all His goodness and mercies to us. For He “made all things for Himself” at first. And He still doeth all things for Himself, even for His Own glory. And we accordingly set forth His glory in all our public devotions; by owning Him publicly for our great and continual Benefactor, by recounting the glorious works that He hath done for us, and supplicating Him for all the good things that we can ever have: and so ascribing the glory of all to Him. And therefore we ought in reason to perform such devotions as often as we can. We are bound to do it, by all those reasons which oblige us to serve God that made us, and to do the work which He sent us into the world about. For that this is properly the serving of God, or, as we therefore call it, ‘Divine service,’ the Holy Ghost Himself testifies, where, speaking of Anna the Prophetess, He saith, that “she departed not from the Temple, but served God with fasting and prayer night and day,” that is, as she constantly kept the fasts of the Church, so she as constantly “went to the Temple at the hour of prayer,” both evening and morning; and there performed her devotions. And if we would have the same testimony that she had, even that we serve God, we must endeavour all we can to follow her pious example, as we see the Apostles in my text did, by going “into the Temple,” or the house of God, “at the hour of prayer.”

Prov. 16. 4.

Luke 2. 37.

And, as this is much for the honour of God, so it is also for the honour of Christ, and that holy religion which He hath planted upon earth; which, though it be the best, or rather the only true religion professed in the world, yet it cannot appear to be so any other way than by the lives and actions of those who profess it; and particularly by the frequency of their public devotions to the Supreme Governor of the world. If they who profess the Christian religion come short of other people in this, it would be a great reflection upon the Founder of it. For it would seem to intimate, as if His religion had not that power upon the minds of men as others have, nor answered the end and

notion of religion in general, even the glorifying Almighty God, so well as others do. But there are no people upon earth we know of, who have any sense of religion at all, but they do something or other every day, whereby to express it, and to shew the great esteem and respect they have for the God they worship.

The Mahometans, although their religion be grounded upon mere imposture, yet notwithstanding, being obliged by it to pray five times a-day, they usually do it, if they can, in their mosques or temples. I know the primitive Christians prayed oftener, and so do many at this day, either in public or private. But the greatest part of those which are called Christians scarce ever pray, at least as we know of, so much as once a-week, unless it be perhaps on the Lord's Day. Nay, I fear there are many, who never publicly pray at all, for a whole year together, if in their whole lives. But woe to such Christians as these, if they may be called so, who thus crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, putting Him to open shame. It will be far more tolerable for Turks and Mahometans at the Day of Judgment than for these.

The Jews, as I have shewn, had their set hours of prayer every morning and evening, both at the Temple and in all their synagogues, which were dispersed all over the country. And they were so constant and punctual in going thither "at the hours of prayer," that if any one lived near a synagogue, and did not then go to pray with the congregation, they put a mark upon that man, calling him רעבן רע, 'an ill neighbour,' as Maimonides, a learned Jew, assures us in his Tephillah. I wish there were no such neighbours among us, 'ill neighbours,' that seldom or never join with us in our public devotions; and so, as to all outward appearance, live as "without God in the world." But what a reproach is this to our holy religion, and to our blessed Saviour Himself, the Author of it, that Jews and Turks, who are strangers, yea, enemies to His religion, should be more constant at their devotions to Almighty God, than they who profess it! God grant it may never be laid to their charge. But why do I wish that, when I know that it will? It will most certainly be laid to their charge ere long, except they repent of it before it be too late; and that too, so as to be as constant for the

future at our public prayers, as they have hitherto slighted or neglected them.

This would, in a great measure, retrieve the honour which our religion hath lost by such careless professors of it; for it would cast such a lustre upon it, as would make it outshine all other religions in its outward appearance, as much as it excels them in its inward purity and truth; which would redound very much to the glory of Christ, our ever-blessed Redeemer. And, therefore, all that have any regard for that, as I hope we all have, cannot but look upon themselves as bound in duty to take all opportunities they can get of performing their public devotions to Almighty God, according as that religion requires which He hath taught, and they profess.

If we would but give ourselves time to look into these things, which I have thus briefly explained, we might easily see what obligation lies upon ministers to read, and upon people to assist at, our public prayers, when and wheresoever they can get an opportunity. It is God's will, and for His glory; and therefore it is our duty, and we are bound to do it, whether we can get any thing by it or no. But that great and most gracious God, Whom we serve, hath of His infinite goodness so ordered it, that whatsoever is done in obedience to His command, and for the honour of His Name, doth, *ipso facto*, tend also to our profit and advantage. And this particularly doth so in a high degree.

Prayer itself, in general, is a duty so well-pleasing unto God, that He hath appointed it to be the means whereby to obtain of Him all the good things we can want or desire; He hath passed His word, and hath promised to grant them, if we ask them as we ought, in the Name of Christ, and with faith in His word and promise. And if the prayers which single persons make in their own private houses or closets be so powerful and prevalent, those are much more so which are made by several persons met together for that purpose in God's house. To these public prayers there are many special promises made, which belong peculiarly unto them. I shall instance only in two. The first shall be that of our Blessed Saviour: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall

Matt. 7. 7;
21. 22;
Mark 11. 24;
John 16. 23;
&c.

Matt. 18. 19.
20.

ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them." Here we have Christ's Own word, that where any two (much more where many) agree to ask any thing of God, as we do in every petition we put up in our public prayers, it shall be done for them. And that where two or three, or any number of devout persons, are met together in His Name, He is specially present with them, to hear their prayers, and to present them to His Father, to be accepted and granted by Him. Which promise, in all respects, doth as properly belong to our public as to any prayers that can be made; they being such as we all agree in beforehand; and we do not only meet, but put them up also in the Name of Christ.

2 Chron. 7.
15.

Josh. 1. 5.

Heb. 13. 6.

The same may be said also of the promise which God made to the house that Solomon had built and dedicated to Him, saying, "Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place." For though this promise was first made to that house particularly, yet in that it was designed for all such places as should be dedicated to God, as that was. As, God having said to Joshua, "I will not fail thee nor forsake thee;" the Apostle from thence infers that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me;" so here, the Lord having said to Solomon, "Mine ears shall be attentive to the prayer that is made in this place;" we may boldly say, the Lord hath a particular respect to places devoted to His service, and will in a peculiar manner hear and accept the prayers which we make in them.

Now seeing there are such special promises made to prayers publicly performed by several persons together in God's Own house, we therefore ought to have a special regard to such prayers, and a special trust and confidence that God, according to the said promises, will in a special manner hear them, and grant what we there pray for together. And then He will certainly do it, as the Saints of God in all ages have found by experience; and therefore have always preferred the public before the private devotions. And if they could not be bodily present with them, while

their brethren were at their public devotions in God's house, yet they had such a respect to them, that they would pray at the same time, and so join with them in their souls, although they could not do it with their bodies. There are many instances of this in the Holy Scripture; and some wherein God Himself was pleased, in a wonderful manner, to signify His approbation of it. It was at the evening sacrifice, the time of public prayer, that Ezra made that solemn prayer, which was so highly approved of as to be made part of the canonical Scriptures. It was at the time of the offering the evening sacrifice at Jerusalem, that Elijah the Prophet, at Mount Carmel, prayed so effectually, that "the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench," which he had there made, to the confirming of the people in the worship of the true God. It was about the time of the evening oblation that Daniel was praying, when the Angel Gabriel was sent to acquaint him with the precise time of the Messiah's coming. And if we may believe an Apocryphal book, it was about the time that the incense that evening was offered at Jerusalem, "in the house of the Lord," that Judith prayed at Bethulia, so as to overcome that vast army which then lay before the place. Be sure it was at "the ninth hour," the hour of public prayer, that Cornelius was praying in his house, when an Angel was sent to acquaint him, that "his prayers and his alms were come up for a memorial before God," and to direct him how to come to the knowledge of Christ, and so into the way of Salvation.

It was not certainly for nothing that it is so particularly noted, that these prayers were made by such eminent saints at the time of evening sacrifice, or, which is the same, at "the ninth hour," the hour of public prayer. Neither do I see any reason why such a circumstance should be so often left upon record, but that we should learn thereby that God hath a particular respect, according to His promise, to the public devotions which His people perform together to Him; so as to hear also the prayers which are made at the same time by others, who join with them in their hearts, though they cannot any other

Ezra 9. 5.

1 Kings 18.
26, 29.

Dan. 9. 21.

Jud. 9. 1.

Acts 10. 3,
30.

Ps. 141. 2. way. As David also did, when, praying in private, or at some distance from the Temple, he said to God, "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice," where we may observe that in this, as well as in all the places before quoted, not the morning, but the evening sacrifice, is particularly named; because, as I suppose, that was the greater sacrifice of the two, as being offered at the same hour wherein the death of Christ, typified by it, was actually accomplished, and for that reason, also, no sacrifice was to be offered after that. And here we may likewise observe how great esteem David had for the public service at the Temple, and how much he preferred it before his own private prayer, in that he had not only an eye to it while he prayed, and so joined as well as he could in it, but he desired that his private prayer might be like to that, or as acceptable as that was to God.

But the more pleasing any duty is to God, the more profitable it is to those who do it. And therefore he having so often, both by word and deed, manifested himself well pleased with the public or common service which His people perform to Him, we cannot doubt but they always receive proportionable advantage from it. The Jews call stated public prayers *מִצְדָּוֹת*, 'stations,' and have a saying among them, 'that without such stations the world could not stand.' Be sure, no people have any ground to expect public peace and tranquillity, without praising and praying publicly unto Him Who alone can give it. But if all the people, suppose of this nation, should every day with one heart and mouth join together in our common supplications to Almighty God, how happy should we then be! how free from danger! how safe and secure under His protection! This is the argument which Christ Himself useth, why "men ought always to pray and not to faint;" in the parable of the unjust judge, who was at last prevailed with to grant a widow's request, merely by her importunity in asking it. "And shall not God," saith He, "avenge His Own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you He will avenge them speedily." But then He adds,

Luke 18. 7, 8. "Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall He find

faith on the earth?" As if He had said, God will most certainly avenge and protect those who cry day and night, morning and evening, to Him. But men will not believe this; and that is the reason why there are so few who believe that He will hear their prayers, according to His promise. But blessed be God, though they be but few, there are some who really believe God's Word, and accordingly pray every morning and evening, not only for themselves, but for the country where they live, for all their governors both in Church and State, and for all sorts and conditions of men among us. To these the whole kingdom is beholden for its support and preservation. If they should once fail, I know not what would become of us. But so long as there are pious and devout persons crying day and night to God for aid and defence against our enemies, we need not fear any hurt they can ever do us; at least according to God's ordinary course of dealing in the world. I know that He is sometimes so highly incensed against a people, that He will hearken to no intercessions for them. As when He said of the idolatrous and factious Jews, "Though Moses and Samuel Jer. 15. stood before Me, yet My mind could not be towards this people." Moses had before diverted His wrath from them, *Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 14,* and so had Samuel, *1 Sam. vii. 9,* but at this time He saith, Though both of them stood before Him and besought Him for it, yet He would not be reconciled to this people. Which plainly implies that this was an extraordinary case, and that He ordinarily used to hearken to the prayers which His faithful servants, such as Moses and Samuel were, made to Him in behalf of the people among whom they dwelt: according to that of the Apostle St. James, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5. 16. To the same purpose is that parallel place in the Prophet Ezekiel, where God saith, "That if a land sin grievously against Him, and He send the famine, the sword, the pestilence, or the like punishment, to cut off both man and beast from it, though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver none but their own souls." Ezek. 14. 14, 16, 18, 20. But here we may likewise observe, that in such an extraordinary case as this, which God grant may not be our own ere long, although such righteous

Joseph. de
Bell. Jud. l.
vii. c. 17.
Euseb.
Hist. Eccl.
l. iii. c. 5.

persons by all their prayers and tears can deliver none else, yet they themselves shall be delivered. As Lot was out of Sodom, and the Christians at the final destruction of Jerusalem, when eleven hundred thousand Jews perished, and not one Christian, they being all by the secret providence of God conveyed out of the city before the siege began; which shews the particular care that God takes of all that believe and serve Him. And that one would think is enough to prevail with all that consult their own or others' welfare, to neglect no opportunities which they can get of serving so great and good a Master all the ways they can, and particularly by performing their daily devotions to Him. In that they have good ground to hope that He will hear their prayers for others, but may be sure He will take care of them, whatsoever happens.

Besides these common benefits which accrue to the kingdom and Church in general, from the common prayers which are daily performed in it, and to the persons who perform them as they are members of the same; there are likewise many others which they thereby receive, every one in his own private capacity, as he is a Christian in general; especially when they perform these their daily devotions, according to that excellent order which our Church hath appointed for them. For by thus addressing themselves every day to God as their Heavenly Father, they learn to live with an entire submission to Him, and dependence upon Him, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life. By confessing their sins every day to God, their hearts are always touched with a sense of them, and with godly sorrow and repentance for them. By having God's absolution of them declared every day unto them by one of His Own ministers, they are confirmed in their hopes of pardon by the blood of Christ. By praising and glorifying Almighty God every day, their hearts are cheered and their spirits refreshed with the remembrance and recognition of His glory and goodness towards them, as David's was, when he said, "My soul shall be satisfied even as it was with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth Thee with joyful lips." By hearing some part of God's Holy Word read to them every day, they are constantly put in mind of their duty to

Ps. 63. 5.

Him, what He would have them to believe and do, which otherwise they might be apt to forget. By repeating the Apostles' Creed every day, wherein all the fundamental articles of our Christian religion are comprehended, they are kept firm and steadfast in the true faith of Christ. By praying every day for pardon, and peace, and grace, and all things necessary both for this life and the next, they have the word and promise of God Himself continually engaged to grant them, and therefore may be always confident that they shall have them. By approaching every day into God's special presence, and there conversing with Him according to His Own ordinance and appointment, they live always with a quick sense of God upon their minds, and under the influences of His Holy Spirit to assist and direct them in all their ways.

But why do I offer at shewing the many and great advantages which arise from the daily frequenting the public prayers of the Church, with that attention, faith, reverence, and devotion, which is requisite to so Divine a duty?—when they are so many and so great that no man is able fully to describe them, nor can any conceive aright of them, but only they who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern them. They find by experience, that next to the frequent receiving of the Lord's Supper, this is the most effectual means they can use, whereby to keep their minds always in a truly pious and Christian temper; and therefore are ready upon all occasions to attest it, not only with their lips, but also in their lives and actions; and cannot but wonder how people should slight those holy exercises, which they reap so much profit from, and feel so much pleasure and delight in. Whereas, on the other side, they who never go to the prayers at all, or but very seldom, and so never receive any benefit from them to themselves, they wonder as much how others should receive any; if they be not sometimes tempted, also, to say or think with those sons of Belial in Job, “What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? Job 21. 15. and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?” I hope there are not many who really think so, but I am sure that most men act as if they thought that there is nothing to be got by serving God or praying to Him. For all men naturally desire that which will bring them in any profit

or advantage, and lay out themselves wholly for the obtaining of it. And, therefore, if they believed that the serving of God would do that, they would need no other arguments to persuade them to it. If every man that came to prayers could be sure to get but one shilling for every time he came, I am apt to think that all the churches where there are daily prayers, would be every day as full as they can hold both morning and evening. But the mischief is, the profit which is to be had here is of another nature, and such as they cannot fancy to be any profit at all, in that they are not as they think made richer by it in the things pertaining to this life.

1 Tim. 4. 8. Though that also is a great mistake; "For godliness," or the worshipping and serving God, "hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come." But howsoever, this being only in promise, not in present payment, they cannot get it into their heads that it is worth their while to look after it. And as for the other world, which the promises respect, they have no sense of that upon their minds, or at least, not enough to overbalance their cares for this. And though men may pretend a thousand little excuses for their neglecting the public service of God, this still lies at the bottom of them all. They do not really believe that they can get so much by that as they may by doing something else. If they did, our churches would be all as full as the Exchange is every day in the week. Whereas, we find the contrary by sad and daily experience; insomuch that in this great and populous city, which professeth religion as much, if not more, than any city in the world, to our shame be it spoken, there is scarce one in a hundred that take any more notice of God and His service, than as if they had no God to serve, all the week long. And that which is worst of all, they are not sensible that it is a fault, and so cannot repent of it. Though St. Peter and St. John, and such great Saints, used to go every day to church at the hours of prayer, they do not look upon themselves as bound to do so, for several reasons which they know, but do not care to tell them. And they do wisely in keeping them to themselves; for they may perhaps make a shift to satisfy themselves at present with them, but I fear they can never satisfy others, nor themselves neither, at the Last Day, much less the Judge of the whole world. It would be very well

if they could. But so far as we can guess at them, if we examine them but by the little light we have in this world, we may easily see into the vanity and weakness of them.

This, therefore, is that which I shall now endeavour to do. Not that I can pretend to search into all the reasons, if they may be so called, which keep men from our daily prayers. Some, I believe, have none but their own wills; with such it would be in vain to argue. But they which have any shadow of reason for it, though some have one, some another, as they themselves best know; yet I humbly conceive they may all be reduced to these following heads, which I shall now consider.

1. *First*, Therefore, some will not come to our prayers, because, as they pretend, they do not like them. But why do not they like them? Is there any thing in them contrary to the Word of God, or unbecoming His service? That most of them, be sure, cannot say, for they never read nor heard them in their lives, nor are suffered to do it by those which have power over them, lest they should see, as they certainly would, their error or mistake. And they who have sometimes perhaps read or heard them, if they would but impartially examine them by God's revealed will, cannot but acknowledge them to be exactly consonant and agreeable to it; and some of them have testified the same, by joining with them upon occasion, which it is supposed they would never have done if they thought it unlawful, as it must needs be, if there be any thing in them contrary to God's Word. But why, then, do not they do it often? why not every day? The great reason which they pretend is, because our prayers are read out of a book, and they had rather hear a man pray by heart and extempore, which they think to be more edifying; but the contrary to that hath been often demonstrated beyond all contradiction, together with the many and great inconveniences which usually follow upon such private extempore prayers in public, not to be suffered in the Church of Christ, as they never were in any part of it till of late years, and then too, nowhere else but in this island. And therefore at present I would only desire those, who separate from our public prayers, not out of humour or faction, but merely out of an erroneous and

misguided conscience, of which sort I hope there are some : — I would desire such to consider, whether the great promise which our Saviour hath made to public prayers can possibly be applied to their way of praying. To me it seems impossible, in that they do not perform the condition required

Matt. 18. 19. in it. The promise I mentioned before : it runs thus, “ Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father Which is in Heaven.” It is plain that this promise belongs to public prayers, such as are made by several persons together, at the least by two : and it is as plain also, that it belongs only to such public prayers wherein those several persons agree together beforehand what they shall ask or pray for. But where the Minister useth only an extempore prayer, how many people soever may be present at it, there are no two of them who agree what they shall ask ; that is left wholly to the Minister, none of the people so much as knowing what he intends to ask ; nor he himself neither before he hath asked it. They may perhaps agree to it after they hear it, and perhaps not ; but if they do, that is not the thing which the promise requires : for it is made only to those who agree touching any thing that they shall ask ; and so requires a previous agreement about the matter of our public prayers, before we put them up to Almighty God, which they who use only extemporaneous prayers can by no means pretend to, nor, by consequence, to this great promise of God’s granting what they ask.

But now, in the public prayers of the Church, we keep close to the condition of the promise : we ask nothing but what we all agree beforehand shall be asked. All the clergy in England, by their procurators in Convocation, and all the commons by their representatives in Parliament, agreed together touching every thing that should be asked every day in the year. And so do all that come to the prayers ; they all know before what shall then be asked, and accordingly agree in the asking of it ; and therefore have sure ground to believe, that God, according to His promise, will do it for them.

These words of our Saviour might be further improved

to shew, not only the lawfulness, but the necessity of set forms of prayer in the public service of God. But I suppose there are none here present but who are satisfied already in that, and therefore shall only add, that they, who pretend this to be the reason why they do not join with us in our daily prayers, because they like those in private congregations better, at the same time give us too much cause to suspect that there is something else at the bottom; for if that was all, they would have those which they call public prayers every day in their own way; or at least would come to ours when they have none of their own, which they never do, and so perform no sort of public service to God upon the week-days; which how they will answer at the Last Day, for my part, I know not; but if they do, it will be very well.

2. There are others, who have a more plausible excuse for their not assisting at the public, because they daily perform their private devotions according to Christ's Own command, saying, "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not Matt. 6. 5, 6. be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret; and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." But, in these words, our Saviour is so far from excusing us from public prayers that He only directs us how we ought to perform them aright; that we must not pray as the hypocritical Pharisees did, only to be seen of men, and so make that the end of their public prayers, which were ordained, and therefore ought to be performed, not for our own, but for God's honour and glory. And whosoever performs them only to be seen of men, they have their reward they looked for, even the applause of men: but they have no ground to expect any reward from God, Who never accepts any services, but such as are performed out of sincere obedience to His laws and for the honour of His Name. And therefore, he that would pray acceptably to God, as he must often pray secretly in his closet, where he cannot have the applause of men in his eye,

because none seeth him but God; so, even in his public prayers, he must act with the same sincere intentions as if he was in private, aiming sincerely at the glory of God, as the great end for which public prayers were ordained, and to which they conduce much more than our private can; for in private, none sees us but God; but in public, though we must not pray therefore that men may see us, yet we cannot pray but some will see us acknowledging God's goodness, and imploring His mercy to us, which is much for His honour and glory. According to that remarkable

Matt. 5. 16. saying of our blessed Saviour, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in Heaven."

Wherefore they who sincerely desire to observe all Christ's commands, as becometh good Christians, they must make conscience of praying often every one in his closet, or by himself. But they must not look upon themselves as thereby excused from praying also publicly as often as they have opportunity; for that also, as I have shewn, is elsewhere commanded by Him. But rather, if they happen to be brought into such a strait, that it is morally impossible for them to perform both, they must prefer the public before their private devotions; and in both must take especial care to act with that simplicity and godly sincerity as becometh those who have to do with an all-seeing God, Who hates nothing more than hypocrisy and deceit.

The same may be said of those prayers which are, or ought to be, performed in every family apart, and by itself, as the great means whereby to keep up the sense of God in it, and to have His blessing always upon it. For which purpose the Common Prayer is certainly the best that can be used, as it may all be, except the "Absolution," by any master of a family, who by this means may, in a great measure, as to his own family, supply the want of the public prayers of the Church where they cannot be had; but where they may, these family prayers should not hinder, but rather make way for them, by fitting the members of each family better for the more solemn service of God in the public congregation. It cannot be doubted but that St. Peter and St. John prayed both in their closets and in their families

“every day;” and yet, for all that, they went up “together into the Temple at the hour of prayer.”

3. Another excuse that men commonly make unto themselves for their neglecting of our daily prayers, is, because God, as they say, hath given them “six days” to labour in, and hath reserved only “one” for Himself; therefore now called “His,” or the “Lord’s Day.” But that they solemnly observe, by joining with the congregation in His public service; and therefore do not think themselves obliged to do so upon other days also, whereon God doth not only permit, but require them to follow their respective callings for the maintenance of themselves and families. It is true, he doeth so: but it doth not from thence follow, that they need not serve God upon those days as well as upon His Own. His Day ought to be spent wholly in His service, and no other business to be done upon it, which may as well be done another day. Upon other days men may and ought to mind their particular callings, as well as their public devotions; but still these ought to be minded as well as those. No people were ever more strictly commanded to keep the Sabbath than the Jews were; yet they were com-
[Exod. 29. 38-40.]
manded also to serve God publicly twice every day, by offering a sacrifice together with their prayers every morning and evening in the week; to which there were only two
[Num. 28. 9, 10.]
more extraordinarily added upon the Sabbath. And we certainly are as much bound to offer up our prayers and praises unto God, as they were to offer up their sacrifices every day; otherwise our religion, in the very point of devotion, would come short of theirs; which cannot be supposed without great absurdity, by any that understand it, and know the Author of it.

But the vanity of this excuse appears sufficiently from what I discoursed before, concerning the necessity and advantages of daily prayers; and therefore shall say no more to it here, but that they who never perform their public devotions unto God, but upon His Own day, will hardly do it well then: and that all who desire in good earnest to keep the Lord’s Day as they ought, must go to Church at the “hour of prayer,” every day in the week, if they can.

But some, perhaps, may say they cannot do it; they cannot spare so much time as that requires, from their

worldly business, upon the week-days, without apparent danger of ruining themselves and families. Some, perhaps, may say this: I am sure all cannot. There are many in and about this city, and in the country too, who have no worldly business to do, or at least do none, all the week long. To them every day is a Sabbath—a day of rest—wherein they have nothing else to do but to serve Him Who hath given them so much leisure on purpose that they might do it. They keep holyday every day, and therefore should keep every day holy, or at least so much of it as is necessary for the offering up their public prayers and praises unto God, Who hath provided so liberally for them; otherwise the time that He hath given them will be spent to little purpose, and their estates, if possible, to less. For they will be so far from doing them any good, that they will but increase their misery, if not in this world, as they often do, yet most certainly in the next.

And as for such among you as follow some particular calling, I must acknowledge it is no more than what you may and ought to do, so far as it is necessary for the maintenance of yourselves and those of your own house, and for your being better able to relieve others, and to do good in the world. But I do not think that you can be therefore excused from attending daily upon the public worship of God, as often as you can; I say, as often as you can. For I know things may sometimes fall out so, that you cannot do it without very great inconvenience. And at such times I humbly conceive you may lawfully be absent without any scruple. But I speak only of the general course of a man's life. As it is said of our blessed Saviour, that being at Nazareth, "He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, as His custom was," so it ought to be your usual custom to go every day to Church, "at the hours of prayer," notwithstanding any ordinary business which you may have to do in the mean time. As I doubt not but you yourselves will acknowledge, if you would but seriously consider these few things.

Luke 4. 16.

First, Consider that you have souls as well as bodies to take care of every day in the year, and another world to provide for as well as this,—an eternal world, where you must live in happiness or misery for ever. And therefore it

would be the height of folly and madness to suffer the ordinary affairs of this life to hinder you from using the means whereby to obtain grace and salvation in the next.

Consider also, That you neither have, nor can have, any thing but what you receive from God. It is only His blessing that "maketh rich." And the way to have that, is to Prov. 10. 22. seek it daily of Him, and to prefer your duty to Him before all things else; without which, you have no ground to expect it: but by this means you cannot fail of it, for you have His Own Word for it.

Matt. 6. 33.

Again consider, You can never get hurt by doing good, nor lose anything by serving God, except that which is better lost than found. Whilst you are sincerely praying to or praising Him Who orders all things in the world, you may be confident, that whatsoever happens to you at that time, shall one way or other turn to your good, or, at least, no real evil shall befall you. As you see in the children of Israel; all their men met together by God's command, at Jerusalem, at three certain times every year; whereby the whole land was left naked and open, without any defence at those times against their enemies round about. And yet it is very observable, none ever invaded it, nor ever so much as attempted to do it, at any of those times when they were met together before God: as He Himself had promised, saying, "Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thrice in the year." Exod. 34. 23, 24.

Furthermore, consider, None of you, I believe, are so busy all the day long in your trades, but you can find time to visit a friend. And what better friend can you visit than Him Who "loved you, and gave Himself for you?" None of you but can find time to go from your own into your neighbour's or perhaps to a public-house, and there continue, perhaps, an hour or two together. And what house can you go to better than God's—His house of public prayer? And where can you spend an hour or two in a day better than there? None of you but can find time every day to converse with one company or other, either about news, or business no way relating to your trades. And what better company can you keep—whom can you converse with better than Him Who governs and overrules all the occurrences of the world? And what better news can you

[Gal. 2. 20 ;
Eph. 5. 2.]

hear than that which is publicly said to you out of His Holy Word, by one of His Own officers? None of you but can find time, every day, when tired with business, to divert yourselves with some recreation or other. And where can you find better diversions? How can you recreate your spirits better than as the glorified Saints and Angels do, by praising, [Rev. 5. 6; 22. 1.] admiring, adoring the eternal God, the Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne in Heaven? In short, if you have no time, for a whole day together, to mind anything else but your particular calling, I heartily pity you. If you have, I am sure you can no way spend it better than by going into the house of God “at the hour of prayer.”

And besides, you who fear that you may lose something by it, I desire you to consider how much you may lose unless you go. If Anna the prophetess had not been in the house of God at the “hour of prayer,” when Christ was first brought thither, she had lost the sight of her Saviour, the Luke 2. 37, most blessed sight that ever mortal saw. If St. Paul had 38. not been praying in the Temple, he had lost that Heavenly trance or ecstasy wherein Christ Himself appeared and Acts 22. 17. spake to him. If St. Peter and St. John had not gone “into the Temple at the hour of prayer,” they had lost the happy opportunity of working a great miracle, and of converting about five thousand persons to the faith of Christ. And those five thousand persons, if they had not been there at that time, they might have lost their souls, and have been undone for ever. So here, suppose you should happen to lose something by leaving your shops or trades awhile, to come to Church and serve God there, you may lose ten times more, yea, ten thousand times more, by not doing of it. The utmost that you can lose by coming to Church, is only the taking or getting a little money, which may do you more hurt than good. But by not coming, you will lose the pleasure of praising and magnifying Him that made you; you will lose the honour of conversing with Him at His Own house, and in His most special presence; you will lose the profit you might receive from His Holy Word there read; you will lose the benefit of all the prayers which are there made; you may lose the love and favour of God, and His blessing upon what you have; you may lose that clear sight and sense of His Divine goodness, which He has often

been pleased to give His people, by “lifting up the light of [Ps. 4. 6.] His countenance upon them” while they are before Him; you will lose the satisfaction of having done your duty and pleased God. Indeed, you may lose you know not what, nor ever will know, till you cast up your accounts at the Last Day, and state your profit and loss impartially on both sides. Then you will clearly see, that the losses which you sustained by the neglect of your daily devotions were infinite and inestimable, and that all the profits you got by it were mere ciphers, signifying nothing at all.

Next to this, you may consider also that you are so happy as to live in a place where the prayers are read most hours of the day. So that if you cannot order your affairs so as to go at one hour, you may go at another. And both morning and evening prayer do not take up much above an hour, or an hour and a half in a day; and it is much if you cannot find so much time in a whole day, wherein to serve and worship Him Who gives you all the time you have. And if some of a family happen to be so necessarily employed for a whole day together, that they cannot, yet it is but rare but others may be spared to go to Church at the hours of prayer. There is no master or mistress of a family but may, if they cannot come themselves, at least send some that belong to them, that so the family may have some share in our prayers if they will. They that will not do so much as that, have little cause to pretend any love to God, to Christ, or to their own, or to any other souls that He hath purchased with His Own blood.

Above all, consider the great end of your coming into and living in the world. God did not make you only to eat and drink, much less to moil and toil only for food and raiment. It is true, He having made such things necessary for the preservation of your life, He doth not only permit, but require you to make use of all lawful means for the getting of them. But still they are only the means, not the end of your living. And as you do not live only to eat, but you eat to live, so you live not for your own sakes, but for His Who gave you life, — even for the sake of God, Who gave you life at first by His Word, without any means, and still continues it to you by the same Word, in the use of

the foresaid means, and all for Himself, for His Own honour and glory : which therefore is, or ought to be, the great end of your eating or drinking, and of all and every action of your whole life ; as we learn from His Apostle, saying, 1Cor.10.31. “ Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” This, therefore, is the great end of your coming into the world, and the great work you have to do in it, even to promote His glory all you can. But in doing this work you will also work out your own Salvation. For it hath pleased God, of His infinite goodness, to join your works and your ways, His glory and your happiness, so inseparably together, that you cannot do one without the other, nor attain either but you shall have both. So far as you advance God’s glory, so far you advance your own happiness. If you glorify Him, He will glorify you, though not for any virtue or merit there is in any thing you do for Him,—all you do being infinitely short of what you owe Him ; yet by the merits of that death which His Son hath suffered, and by virtue of that intercession He always makes for those who finish the work which He hath given [John17.4.] them to do, even “ glorify God in the world.”

Wherefore, as ever you desire,—as I hope you all do,—not to live in vain and to no purpose, but to do the work which you were sent hither about, you must make it your chief care and study every day, and neglect no opportunities that ye can get of promoting the glory of God, and in that your own happiness. But there is nothing you can do every day that conduceth more to that end than our public devotions ; for by them, as I have shewn already, we both set forth God’s glory, and forward our own Salvation. And therefore they ought, in reason as well as duty, to be preferred before your ordinary affairs, as being of more consequence to the main end of your living than any thing else that you commonly do. In other cases, you yourselves always make lesser businesses give way to greater. At any time you will neglect the getting a penny rather than lose a pound. And whatsoever work you have upon your hands, you will lay it aside to feed your bodies, your frail and mortal bodies, two or three times a-day, because you think that to be the more necessary work. And do not you

think it as necessary to take care of your souls as of your bodies? and to serve God, as to feed yourselves every day? Yea, is not this “the better part—the one thing needful?” I am sure you cannot deny it; for Christ Himself hath said it, Luke x. 42. And therefore you cannot but acknowledge that this ought to be done in the first place. So that all the common affairs of this life ought, both in reason and conscience, to give place, as much as is possible, to your serving God, so as that your souls may live, and be happy for ever.

If you would but keep these things always in your mind, you would never suffer any slight occasion to keep you either from your private or public devotions; you would not consider whether you can spare time from minding the world to serve God, but whether you can spare time from serving God to mind the world; not what you may lose by going to Church, but what you may lose by staying at home: and so would need no other monitor to put you every day in mind of going to the house of God, as the Apostles did, “at the hour of prayer.”

But, after all, I fear there are but few will do it—but few of those also who have now heard it to be their duty. They think it enough that they have been hearing; as for practising, that they do not love to think of. But I heartily wish that such hearers would consider what St. Paul saith, *Rom. 2. 13.* “Not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified:” what St. James saith, *James 1. 22.* “Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves:” what Christ Himself saith, “That servant *Luke 12. 47.* which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes:” and what they themselves can say for themselves at the Last Day. I am sure they cannot plead ignorance, for they have been now sufficiently told of it. And what other excuses they can make besides those which have been already answered, I cannot imagine, except it be one which is not worth answering, but that it will give us occasion to explain the way and manner of performing our daily devotions aright, to God’s glory and our own good;—and for that purpose it may not be amiss to take notice of it. In short, therefore, it is this: some, perhaps, may say that they have

been sometimes at our daily prayers, but never found themselves any better for it ; and therefore do not think it worth their while to go any more.

This, I must confess, may seem a notable argument to such as measure their duty only by their profit, and think it not worth their while to do any thing for God, unless they can get something to themselves by it. But I would have such to know that God is their Maker, and they are therefore bound to do what He commands, whether they can get any thing by it or not. If He gives them any thing, they must thank Him for it. For they are still but “unprofitable servants,” they have done no more than what was their “duty to do,” nor so much if they do it only for their own advantage. For it is their duty not only to do what He commands, but to do it, therefore, because He commands it, in sincere obedience to Him and His supreme authority over all things. Unless they do that, they have no ground to expect any thing from Him for what they do, but wrath and judgment for not doing it as they ought. And how much soever they do, and how well soever they do it, He is not obliged to them, but they to Him for it ; it being only by His power they can do it at all, and by His grace only they do it well. And therefore, if He consider them for their doing their duty to Him, they must ascribe it wholly to His free grace and mercy in Jesus Christ, which whether He is pleased to vouchsafe unto them or not, they are still bound to obey and serve Him as much as if He did, and that too, not with respect to their own profit, but to His will and pleasure.

I speak not this, as if we could ever serve God for nought. For we can never do any thing for Him, but it will most certainly redound by His goodness to our advantage. But I speak it only to shew the vanity of this excuse that some men make for their neglecting their public devotions, because they have been sometimes at them, but do not perceive themselves any better for it. But, after all, I am much of their mind. I do not think that they are or can be much the better for attending upon the public worship of God only sometimes. For it is plain that they who do it only sometimes, do it only by the by, when they have no great matter else to do. They do not make it their work

or business, and therefore cannot expect any reward for it, nor get any good at all, much less so much as to be made better by it.

The solemn praying and praising God, and reading and hearing His most Holy Word read, and so His Divine will published and declared in His Own house, by one of His Own ministers, are the ordinary means of grace. But they work not by any virtue inherent in themselves, but by the power of Christ's Holy Spirit, which, according to His promise, abides continually in His Church, assisting and actuating the said means, when duly administered in it, so as to make them effectual to the end for which they were ordained. And therefore, they who would attain that end, must use those means, not only now and then, but constantly, or at least as often as they can. They must "watch daily at the gates of Wisdom, and wait at the posts of her doors," if ever they desire to be admitted in. They must live continually under the influences of God's Holy Spirit, moving upon their souls as He did upon the waters in the creation, till He hath brought them into order, and created them again in Jesus Christ unto good works. Otherwise they have no ground to expect to be made new creatures. It is not a man's going into the right way sometimes, but his walking in it, that will bring him to his journey's end. Our public devotions are the way, the right way that leads to the grace of God: but he that would come at the end, so as to have the grace of God always sufficient for him, he must not only step into this way sometimes, but he must keep always in it, as much as it is possible, so as to let slip no opportunity he can get of going to the house of God "at the hour of prayer." Neither is that all: it is not enough to go into the house of God "at the hour of prayer," but when he is there, he must do the work of that time and place, and nothing else. He must not stand looking about him, as if he had nothing to do there; neither must he suffer his thoughts to wander about upon other things, like those the Prophet speaks of, saying, "And they come unto Thee as the people cometh, and they sit before Thee as my people, and they hear Thy words, but they will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness." Prov. 8. 34.
Ezek. 33. 31.

Such people had as good be out of the Church as in it, for any good they either do or get there. Indeed, they are not wholly in it; only their worser part, their bodies, are there; their souls are at home in their shops, among their chapmen or neighbours, or running about the country, perhaps as far as the Indies, minding their affairs there. And how can such people expect to be ever the better for being in God's house, when they affront Him to His face, making a show as if they served Him, when really they were about other business? Yet this is the case of most of those who go thither only sometimes; for, not being used to that kind of work, they do not know how to set about it, much less to keep their minds so intent upon it as is necessary to the due performance of it.

The work we have to do in God's house is a great work, the greatest we can ever do; it is God's Own work, the work He tells us to do for Himself, even to serve, and worship, and glorify Him that made both our souls and bodies; and therefore both our souls and bodies must be wholly employed in it. As for our bodies, He hath given us this general rule, Eccles. 5. 1. "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God," that is, to look to thy ways; take care of thy outward carriage and deportment; see thou behavest thyself, in God's house as becometh one who believeth himself to be in the presence of the greatest person in the world. For so we are whensoever we meet together in God's house; we are in His special presence. He Himself hath said, that He is "in the midst of us;" and therefore we are bound to believe it, and to shew we do so, by all such reverent and humble gestures before Him as we should certainly use if we saw Him with our bodily eyes. Especially when we pray unto Him, we must do it upon our knees, as we should if we put up a petition but to an earthly prince. How much more to the King of all kings! And when we praise His holy Name, although we do it standing, yet that also must be done in such a posture of adoration, as may testify our fear and reverence of His Divine Majesty. Some, perhaps, may think these to be mere ceremonies; but I am sure, that kneeling and bowing to Almighty God is that which the Holy Scriptures mean by worshipping of Him, and therefore forbid us to do it to any

[Matt. 18.
20.]

in a religious manner but to the true God. And as this is the way to worship God with our bodies, so it is the best means we can use whereby to keep our souls too in a pious and devout temper before Him. For by this means we are all the while put in mind of that glorious Person we are speaking to, and of the great work we are about, which otherwise we should be very apt to forget; as we have too much cause to fear they do, who speak to God in the same posture as they do to one another. I say, speak, not pray, for that is the work of the heart as well as of the mouth. And if their hearts were upon God, while they are speaking to Him, I do not see how it is possible for them not to fall down and worship before Him.

But we must remember, that “God is a Spirit; and they John 4. 24. that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth,” that is, at the same time that they worship God with their bodies, they must do it also in their spirits, without which all their bodily worship will signify nothing. For worship, properly so called, is nothing else but some outward sign of our inward fear of God. But where there is no fear of God in the spirit, there cannot be truly any outward sign of it. And therefore such cannot be said to worship God in truth, who do not worship Him in their spirits as well as with their bodies.

Here, then, is the great task we have to do in all our public devotions, even to keep our spirits or hearts in a right posture all the while that we are before God, Who sees them and takes special notice of all their motions: that we may “pray 1Cor. 14. 15. with the spirit, and pray with the understanding also,” as St. Paul did. I call this a great task, because I know it is the hardest work we have to do; our thoughts being so very quick and nimble, so unconstant and desultory, that it is difficult to keep them close to the work we are about, so as to serve the Lord without distraction. But it is a thing that must be done, if we desire to receive any real benefit and comfort from our devotions. And blessed be God, by His assistance we may all do it, if we will but set ourselves in good earnest about it, and observe these few rules, which may be very helpful unto us in it.

First, when we go to the house of God at the hour of

prayer, be sure to leave all worldly cares and business behind you, entertaining yourselves, as ye go along, with these, or suchlike sentences of Scripture: "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God! My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

Ps. 42. 1, 2. "O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God." "We will go into His tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before His footstool."

Ps. 84. 1, 2. "O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God." "We will go into His tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before His footstool."

Ps. 132. 7. "We will go into His tabernacle, and fall low on our knees before His footstool."

Gen. 28. 17. When you come into the church, say with Jacob, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!" or something to that purpose. And as soon as ye can get an opportunity, prostrate yourselves upon your knees before the Master of the house, the Great God of Heaven, humbly beseeching Him to unite your hearts unto Himself, to cleanse your thoughts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, to open your eyes, and to manifest Himself unto you, and to assist you with such a measure of grace in offering up these your spiritual sacrifices, that they be acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ.

And now set yourselves in good earnest as in God's sight, keeping your eye only upon Him, looking upon Him as observing what you think as well as what you say or do, all the while you are before Him.

While one or more of the sentences out of God's Holy Word (wherewith we very properly begin our devotions to Him) are reading, apprehend it as spoken by God Himself at first, and now repeated in your ears, to put you in mind of something which He would have you to believe or do upon this occasion.

While the exhortation is reading, hearken diligently to it, and take particular notice of every word and expression in it, as contrived on purpose to prepare you for the service of God, by possessing your minds with a due sense of His special presence with you, and of the great ends of your coming before Him at this time.

While you are confessing your sins with your mouth, be

sure to do it also in your hearts, calling to mind every one, as many as he can, of those particular sins which he hath committed, either by doing what he ought not to do, or not doing what he ought, so as to repent sincerely of them, and steadfastly to resolve never to commit them any more.

While the Minister is pronouncing the absolution in the Name of God, every one should lay hold upon it for himself, so as firmly to believe that, upon true repentance and faith in Christ, he is now discharged and absolved from all his sins, as certainly as if God Himself had declared it with His Own mouth, as He hath often done it before, and now by His Ministers.

While you together with the Minister are repeating the psalms or hymns to the honour and glory of God, observe the Minister's part as well as your own; and lift up your hearts together with your voices, to the highest pitch you can, in acknowledging, magnifying, and praising the infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, and glory of the Most High God in all His works, the wonders that He hath done and still doeth for the children of men, and for you among the rest.

While God's Word is read in either of the chapters, whether of the Old or New Testament, "receive it not as ^{1 Thes. 2. 13.} the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the Word of God, which effectually worketh in you that believe." And therefore hearken to it with the same attention, reverence, and faith, as you would have done if you had stood by Mount Sinai, when God proclaimed the Law, and by our Saviour's side, when He published the Gospel.

While the Prayers or Collects are reading, although you ought not to repeat them aloud, to the disturbance of other people, yet you must repeat them in your hearts, your minds accompanying the Minister from one prayer to another, and from one part of each prayer to the other, all along, with affections suitable to the matter sounding in your ears, humbly adoring and admiring God, according to the names, properties, or works, which are attributed to Him at the beginning of each prayer, earnestly desiring the good things which are asked of Him in the body of it, for yourselves or others; and steadfastly believing in Jesus Christ for His

granting of them, when He is named, as He is at the end of every prayer, except that of St. Chrysostom ; because that is directed immediately to Christ Himself, as promising that “ when two or three are gathered together in His Name, He will grant their requests,” which is therefore very properly put at the end of all our daily prayers, and also of the Litany (most part whereof is directed also to our Saviour), that when we have made all our common supplications unto Him, we may act our faith in Him again for God’s granting of them according to His said promise, and so may be dismissed with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion or fellowship of the Holy Ghost, under which are comprehended all the blessings that we have or can desire to make us completely happy both now and for ever.

After the blessing, it may be expedient still to continue for some time upon your knees, humbly beseeching Almighty God to pardon what He hath seen amiss in you since you came into His presence ; and that He would be graciously pleased to hear the prayers, and to accept of the praises, which you have now offered up unto Him, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate.

These few directions I thought good to lay before you, as being of great use towards the right performance of your public devotions, so as that they may be both acceptable to God and profitable to yourselves. I fear some may think it hard to keep their minds intent so long together ; but they can do it much longer upon worldly affairs, and therefore may in this too, if they will. “ If they will : ” there lies the main stress of the business. If men will resolve, by God’s assistance, to fix their minds upon Him and His service while they are before Him, they may certainly do it in a high degree, as I do not doubt but many here present have found by their own experience ; such I mean, who have been long accustomed to it : and though to others it may seem difficult at first, yet by use it will soon grow easy, if they will be persuaded to make trial of it, which I wish heartily you would all do. Try a little what it is to go to the house of God every day at the hours of prayer, and there to perform your devotions to Him with all your hearts as near as

you can. Do but use yourselves to it for one quarter or half a year, and I dare say that you will find it not only easy, but so pleasant and profitable to your souls, that you will never leave it off so long as you are able to do it. And though you cannot do every thing so well as you would at first, let not that discourage you, but strive to do it as well as you can; and then, by His assistance, Who is there specially present with you, by degrees you will overcome all difficulties, and learn to use those blessed means of grace, so as to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ every day more and more.

[2 Pet. 3.
18.]

And, indeed, unless you do that, you may be confident that you do not use them aright. For there are so many promises made to them by Him Who cannot lie, that if there be no failure in the use, they can never fail of their effect. Insomuch, that if, notwithstanding your frequenting our daily prayers, you shall still continue in any known sin; if you do not gather strength to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; if you do not increase in the knowledge and love of God, in temperance, patience, meekness, and humility, in justice, charity, and all manner of virtue; in short, if you do not live more soberly, more righteously, and more godly in this present world than otherwise you would; you may be sure, that although you live under the means of grace, you do not make that use of them which you might and ought to do; though you seem to perform your devotions to God, yet really you do it not. How oft soever your bodies may be at church, your hearts are always somewhere else. And so you come to no purpose at all, or rather to very ill purpose. For this is plainly to mock God and to play the hypocrites with Him, making as if you had a mind to serve and glorify Him, when you mind nothing less, but rather do Him all the disservice and dishonour that you can, by giving occasion to the enemy to blaspheme His holy Name, and to think it is to no purpose to serve God, seeing you who seem to do it are as bad as other people. And besides, hereby you may discourage many who otherwise would be inclined to set upon a pious and religious course of life. For when they observe any of you, who come to church every day, guilty of the same vices as they are who never come at all, they will be

tempted to judge that all are so ; and by consequence, that there is nothing in devotion but a mere outward show and appearance of religion ; and that they who go to church do it not to serve God, but themselves, to get themselves the name and reputation of being pious and godly men, and under that cloak to hide their faults, and commit all manner of villany, as some sort of men, we know, of later years have done, to the scandal and reproach of the Christian religion. So that, by this means, your very coming to church would be more for the Devil's service than for God's. The Devil always had, and always will have, a spite at our public devotions, and catch at all opportunities to throw dirt in their face, to make them appear as deformed and ugly as he can. And if any of those who frequent God's house, and seem to serve Him there, should notwithstanding lead wicked and profane lives, they would promote the same hellish design of bringing devotion into contempt and scorn, and so would do the Devil's work, and must expect their wages from him at last.

Heb. 6. 9.

“ But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany Salvation, though we thus speak.” And although some of those who come to prayers only now and then, when they have nothing else to do, may, perhaps, be the Devil's drudges in this matter ; yet I cannot imagine how they should be so who make it their business to serve God publicly every day. For that must needs give check to any evil motions, and leave such a tincture upon their minds, that will break and shew itself in all holy conversation and godliness. And, therefore, I speak this only to shew how much it concerns you to take care how you live, and, for that purpose, how you pray : that your lives may in all points be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ ; that you may adorn your profession with all virtuous and good works ; that you may shine as lights in the world : so that men may see there is more in going every day to church than they are aware of, and so may be persuaded to follow you thither “ at the hours of prayer.”

But for that purpose, whenever ye go thither ye must be sure to do the work you go about as well as possibly you can. For the better you serve God there, the better you will do it every where else ; the more serious and hearty you

are at your public devotions, the more righteous and holy you will be in all manner of conversation both towards God and towards men. For as these are in themselves some of those duties which we owe to God, so they are the means, too, which He hath appointed whereby to give us grace to perform all the rest. And the more carefully we use the means, the more grace we shall get by them. So that by this means we may “add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, know- 2 Pet. 1. 5-7. ledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” Neither shall we only add one grace to another, but also one degree of every grace unto another. “We shall go Eph. 4. 13. from strength to strength, till we come, in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

This is a great truth. But I would not have you take it only from me, but from yourselves; and for that purpose make the experiment. Take all occasions you can get of going daily into the house of God, “at the hours of prayer,” and to His Table when His Supper is there administered, and perform the several duties which are there required of you, with all the care and diligence that you can. Do but this, and you will find all that I have said to be not only true, but short of what you yourselves will feel; and so will be soon convinced by your own experience, that weekly Sacraments and daily prayers are the greatest blessings you can have on this side Heaven, and the best way to bring you thither, through the merits of Jesus Christ, to Whom, &c.

THE GREAT
NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGE
OF
FREQUENT COMMUNION.*

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.—1 Cor. xi. 26.

THE Lord's death here spoken of is the death of the Lord, the Almighty and Eternal Son of God: that death which He suffered in the nature and in the stead of mankind in general, and particularly of us who are here present: that death, whereby He expiated our sins, and made complete satisfaction to the Divine truth and justice for them: that death, whereby He appeased the wrath which He that made us had justly conceived against us, and hath reconciled Him again unto us: that death, whereby He delivered us from the slavery of sin and Satan, and asserted us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God: that death, whereby He redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made Himself a curse for us: that death, whereby He purchased for us both pardon, and peace, and mercy, and grace, and power to eschew evil and do good, and all the blessings we can ever have or desire, either in this world or the next: that death, by virtue whereof He entered into Heaven, "now to appear in the presence of God for us," and therefore "is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." This is that Lord's death, which the Apostle here saith we shew, "as often as we eat the bread and drink the cup" he speaks of in the verses before my text, where he saith, that "the

[Heb. 9.
24.]
ch. 7. 25.

Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." In which words we have Christ's Own institution of the Sacrament of His Last Supper, together with the end of it, declared by Himself, saying, at the institution of the bread, "This do in remembrance of Me:" and, again, at the cup, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me;" that is (as is signified in the institution itself), 'in remembrance of My body as broken, and My blood as shed, and so in remembrance of Me, as dying for the sins of the world, and yours among the rest.' And that this is the great end of this holy institution, the Apostle further proves and explains in the words of my text, from this reason, because hereby we "shew the Lord's death;" the bread shews the breaking of His body, the cup shews the shedding of His blood, and so both together shew the death He suffered for us. "For as often," saith He, "as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

In which words we may first observe, that every time that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is administered, His death is thereby shewn and declared to all that are there present. As when the Jews ate the Paschal lamb, the master of the family declared the reasons why they ate it, why they ate it with bitter herbs, and why with unleavened bread, and the like: so here, when we eat the bread and drink the cup according to Christ's institution, we thereby declare the reasons of it, though not by words, yet by the very act itself, and the several circumstances of it. By the "breaking of the bread," we declare Christ's body to be broken and wounded to death; by the "cup," we declare His blood to be shed or poured out for the sins of the world, and by distributing both the bread and the cup to each communicant apart, we declare to every one particularly that Christ died for his sins, and that he may be saved by Christ's

[Exod. 13.
8.]

death, if he will but receive and apply it to himself as he ought, by a quick and lively faith.

In the next place, we may here observe, that the Apostle doth not say that Christ's death is repeated, or that He is offered up again every time this Sacrament is administered, but only that the Lord's death is shewn by it. And, therefore, that this is not, as the Papists absurdly imagine, a 'propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead,' but only 'commemorative' and 'declarative' of that one Sacrifice which Christ once offered to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. We may here likewise observe, that the Apostle doth not say, 'As often as ye eat this bread, ye shew the Lord's death,' but 'ye do it as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup:' and therefore, unless both kinds be administered, as Christ's institution is not observed, so neither is the end of it attained; for His death is not shewn by any one, but by both together.

Moreover, we may observe that the Apostle here plainly calls it "bread," and the "cup," or "wine;" not the very body and blood of Christ: yea, he saith it is bread we eat, and it is the cup or wine we drink; and therefore we do not eat the very body that hung upon the cross, nor drink the blood which was there spilt for us, but only in a sacramental sense; which quite overthrowes the 'doctrine of transubstantiation.'

Again, we may from hence observe, that this was no temporary institution, which was to continue only for some time, but to the end of the world, or, as the Apostle here expresseth it, "till He," our Lord and Saviour, "come." As, from the beginning of the world, as often as they offered, according to its first institution, any bloody sacrifice to God, they thereby foreshewed the death of Christ, typified by it, until His first coming into the world to save it; so, since that time, "as often as we eat this bread, and drink this cup," according to Christ's Own institution, "we shew forth His death" all along, until His second coming into the world to judge it. So that it is now by this Sacrament that mankind is, and always must be, put in mind of their Saviour, and what He suffered for them; and therefore this

can never be laid aside, but must continue in the Church to the end of the world. Neither can that be reckoned any part of Christ's Church, where this His Own most holy institution is rejected, disused, or never observed as it ought.

Lastly, we may here observe, that as this Sacrament is to continue always in the Church, so it must be often repeated by the same persons in it. The other Sacrament, even Baptism, is likewise to be always administered in the Church, but it can be administered but once to one and the same person; but the Apostle, here speaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, saith to the same persons, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup:" and to the same purpose our Lord Himself, in the institution of the cup, saith, "This do ye, as often as ye drink it:" plainly implying, that this should be often done by those who are once admitted into His Church: as a man can be born but once, but when he is once born, he must often eat and drink such things as God hath appointed for the preservation of his natural life; so, when a man is once regenerate and born again of water and of the Spirit, he must often eat this bread, and drink this cup, as the great means appointed by Christ Himself for the preservation of his spiritual life, which can never be supported aright without this spiritual food, no more than the natural life can without bodily sustenance.

This, therefore, is that which I intend, by God's assistance, in a more especial manner to speak to at this time. And it is but time to say all we can of it, when this Holy Sacrament is so generally neglected, as it now is (to our shame be it spoken), all the kingdom over. Blessed be God, except some few heathens which are among us, such I mean as were never yet baptized, the nation in general is Christian, the people all profess Christ's religion, and have it established among them by civil laws and sanctions: they are all admitted into Christ's Church, and hope to be saved in it: they all believe Him to be the only Saviour of the world, and therefore expect Salvation only from Him. They all know too, or at least have heard, that He instituted this Holy

Sacrament, and commanded them to receive it in remembrance of Him: and yet, after all, they regard it no more than as if it had never been instituted by Him, no more than as if it was no matter whether they ever remembered Him or not. I need not go far for instances. In this place, where it is as constantly administered, and as much frequented, as in any part of the kingdom, there are several who receive it but very seldom; some never, unless it be to qualify them for an office: many, a great many, I fear, of those who are now present, never yet received it at all: but though they be twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years old, and upwards, yet have lived all this while in the neglect of this Divine institution, having never been so much as once at our Lord's Table, nor knowing what it is to partake of that most blessed body and blood which was broken and shed for them. And so it is in all parts of the kingdom, which is a very sad and melancholy consideration. They who have any love either for God or their neighbours, cannot but be grieved at their hearts to think of it. We have only one Saviour in the world, and He hath instituted only one Sacrament to put us always in mind of Him; and yet that people, that Christians should slight that! what shall I say? I know not how to express their folly and ingratitude, much less the dismal consequences of it. But how to remedy it, I know not. I have done what I could; I have taken all occasions to convince you of your sin and danger in neglecting this blessed Sacrament, and to persuade you to a more frequent receiving of it: but I see nothing will do, indeed, nothing can do it, but the almighty power of God, Whom I therefore beseech, of His infinite mercy, to open men's eyes, that they may see the things that belong to their everlasting peace before they be hid from them. And then I am sure, this Sacrament would be as much frequented as it hath been hitherto neglected. But seeing He is usually pleased to do this great work by the ministry of His word, I shall make it my business, at this time, in His Name, to put you in mind of your duty and interest in this particular, and so set before you such reasons why you ought to take all opportunities of receiving the mystical body and blood of Christ your

Saviour, as I hope, by His blessing, may prevail with many to do it: God grant it may do so with all that hear me at this time.

For this purpose, therefore, I desire you to consider, first, that this is Christ's Own institution and command. He "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery [Phil. 2. 6.] to be equal with God, and yet made Himself of no reputation for your sakes:" He, Who loved you so as to give Himself for you: He, Who laid down His Own life to redeem and save you: He, the very night before He died for you, He then instituted this Holy Sacrament: and He then said to all that hope to be saved by Him, and to you among others, "Do this in remembrance of Me;" and "do this as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." What! and will you that hope to be saved by Him, will you never do this at all? Or only now and then, when, perhaps, you have nothing else to do? How, then, can you hope to be saved by Him? Do you think that He will save you, whether you observe His commands or not? And which of all His commands can you ever observe, if you do not observe this, which is so plain, so easy, so useful, and so necessary for you? No; deceive not yourselves: He that came into the world, and died on purpose to save you, you may be confident, would never have required you to do this, and as often as you do it, to remember Him; but that it is necessary for your Salvation that you do it, and that you do it as often as you can, in remembrance of Him. And if it had been necessary in no other, as it is in many respects, yet His very commanding it makes it so to you, and to your Salvation. For as He is the only "Author of eternal salvation," He is so only to "those who obey Him," that is, "to those who observe all things whatsoever He hath commanded." But this is one of those things which He hath commanded; and therefore, unless you do this, you do not obey Him, and so have no ground to expect Salvation from Him. He Himself hath told you, in effect, that He will not save you, in that He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But you all know that he who lives in any wilful and known sin, or in the wilful neglect of any known duty, he hath not yet repented and turned to God, but is still in his natural state,

Heb. 5. 9.

Matt. 28. 20.

Luke 13. 3,

5.

in a state of sin and damnation. And if he happens to do so, he must inevitably perish; there is no help in the world for it.

Wherefore, my brethren, you had need look about you. Christ, your Saviour, hath expressly commanded you often to receive the Sacrament of His body and blood in remembrance of Him. And, therefore, you who never yet received it, have lived all this while in the wilful breach of a known law; and, by consequence, in a wilful and known sin: and you who receive it but seldom, do not fully obey or come up to the Law, which plainly requires you to do it often—at least if it may be had. It is true, should God in His providence cast you upon a place where you could not receive it if you would, I do not doubt but He would accept of your earnest desires of it as well as if you did receive it, and would make up the great losses you sustained in your spiritual estate for want of it, some other way. But, blessed be His great Name, this is not your case. For He in His good providence hath so ordered it that you live in a place where this Holy Sacrament is actually celebrated every Lord's Day, and may be so, if there be occasion, every day in the year. Our Church requires the first, and hath provided for the other, by ordering that the same Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, which is appointed for the Sunday, shall serve all the week after; and, by consequence, the whole Communion-service, of which they are a part. And, therefore, unless you receive it, and receive it often too, you live in the gross neglect, if not in a plain contempt, of Christ's command; as you will one day find to your shame and sorrow. For how well soever you may otherwise live, this one sin is enough to ruin and destroy you for ever. For, as St. James saith,

Jam. 2. 10. "Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." And therefore, whatever else you do, if you do not this, but offend in this one point, you are liable to all the punishments that are threatened in the Law of God. Neither is there any way to avoid them, except you repent, and turn from this as well as from all other sins.

And, that you may not think that the receiving of this blessed Sacrament only now and then, as perhaps two or three times a-year, will excuse you from the imputation of

living in the neglect of Christ's command, I desire you to consider how the Apostles themselves and the Primitive Christians understood it; which they sufficiently declared by their practice. For when our Lord was gone to Heaven, and had, according to His promise, sent down the Holy Spirit upon His Apostles, and by that means brought into His Church about three thousand souls in one day, it is said of them, "That they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer." Acts 2. 42. And of all that believed, it is said, "That they, continuing daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking of bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." ver. 46. Where we may observe, first, that by breaking of bread in the New Testament is always meant the administration of the Lord's Supper. Secondly, this they are said to have done *κατ' οἶκον*, 'from house to house,' as we translate it, or rather 'in the house,' as the Syriac and Arabic versions have it, and as the phrase *κατ' οἶκον* is used by the Apostle himself, Rom. xvi. 5; 1 Cor. xvi. 19: that is, they did it either in some private house where there was a Church, or more probably in some of the houses or chambers belonging to the Temple, where they daily continued. Thirdly, as they continued daily in the Temple at the hours of prayer, to perform their solemn devotions there, so they daily received the Holy Sacrament, and ate this spiritual food, "with gladness and singleness of heart." This being, indeed, the chief part of their devotions, whensoever they could meet together to perform them, especially upon the Lord's Day, as the Holy Ghost Himself informs us, saying, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them, being ready to depart on the morrow," ch. 20. 7. where we see they did not only break bread, or administer the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, upon the first day of the week, which we from St. John call the Lord's Day, but upon the day they came together for that end and purpose. It is true, St. Paul being to go away next day, he took that opportunity, when they were met together for that end, to give them a sermon. But that was not the end of their meeting together at that time. They did not come to hear a sermon, though

St. Paul himself was to preach, but they came together to administer and receive Christ's mystical body and blood, which plainly shews that this was the great work they did every Lord's Day: and that they came together then on purpose to meet with Christ, and to partake of Him at His Own Table. And seeing that the Law itself required, "that none should appear before the Lord empty," therefore St. Paul requires, that upon the first day of the week, when Christians thus met together to receive the Sacrament, "every one should lay by him in store," as God prospered him, for pious and charitable uses. And hence proceeded that custom which is still continued in our Church, and ought to be so in all, that whensoever we appear before the Lord at His Own Table, we, every one according to his ability, offer up something to Him of what He hath bestowed upon us, as our acknowledgment of His bounty to us, in giving us whatsoever we have, and of His infinite mercy in giving Himself for us.

Ex. 23. 15.
1 Cor. 16. 2.

Now, seeing the Apostles themselves, and such as they first converted and instructed in the faith of Christ, usually received this Holy Sacrament every day in the week, and constantly upon the Lord's Day, it cannot be doubted, but that they looked upon themselves as obliged by Christ's command to do so: and that when He said, "Do this, as oft as ye do it, in remembrance of Me," His meaning and pleasure was, "That they should often do it, as often as they met together to perform their public devotion to Him, if it was possible, or at least upon the Lord's Day." And as this was the sense wherein the Apostles understood our Saviour's words, so they transmitted the same, together with the faith, to those who succeeded them. For Tertullian, who lived in the next century after the Apostles, saith, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist, "in omnibus mandatum à Domino, etiam antelucanis cœtibus," 'was commanded by our Lord to be celebrated in all Christian assemblies, even those which were held before day.' And before him Pliny the Second, who was contemporary with St. John, in the account he gave of the Christians' manners to the Emperor Trajan, saith, among other things, 'That they were wont upon a certain day to meet together before it was light, and to bind them-

Tertull.
de Cor. Mil.
cap. 3;
p. 121. D.
Ed. Rigalt.

Plin. Epist.
lib. 10, ep.
97.

selves by a sacrament, not to do any ill thing,' which can be understood only of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as administered and received by them upon the Lord's Day. And Justin Martyr himself, who lived in the next age after, in the Apology he wrote to Antoninus Pius in behalf of the Christians, giving a particular account of what they did in their public congregations, saith, that τῇ τοῦ ἡλίου λεγομένῃ ἡμέρᾳ, 'upon that which is called the day of the sun,' or Sunday, all Christians that live either in the cities or in the country meet together; where they hear the writings of the Prophets and Apostles read, and an exhortation made to them: and then, they having all joined together in their common prayers, bread and wine is brought and consecrated, or blessed by the president or minister; and distributed to every one there present, and carried by deacons to such as were absent. Καὶ ἡ διάδοσις καὶ ἡ μετάληψις ἀπὸ τῶν εὐχαριστηθέντων ἐκάστῳ γίνεται, 'and the distribution and participation of the consecrated elements is made to every one.'

Just. Mart.
Apol. 2;
p. 162. Ed.
Steph.

And this food, saith he, καλεῖται παρ' ἡμῶν Εὐχαριστία, 'is called by us the Eucharist.' From whence it appears, that in those days every one that was at prayers and sermon received also the Holy Sacrament, at least upon the Lord's Day: None offered to go out till that was over; or, if they did so, they were cast out of the Church, as not worthy to be called Christians, as appears from the Apostolical Canons made or collected much about that time, or soon after; one whereof runs thus, Πάντας τοὺς εἰσίσοντας πιστοὺς, &c., 'all believers that come to church and hear the Scriptures, but do not stay to join in the prayers and the Holy Communion, ought to be excommunicated, as bringing confusion into the Church.' It was then, it seems, reckoned a great disorder and confusion for any to go out of the church, as they now commonly do, till the whole service, of which the Communion was the principal part, was all over; and if any did so, they were judged unfit to come to church, or keep company with Christians any longer. This was the discipline of the Primitive and Apostolic Church. This was the piety of the first Christians, and it continued in a great measure for some ages, as might easily be shewn. But this may be sufficient at present to prove that the Apostles and Primitive Christians

Can. Apos-
tol. 9.

did not think that they observed our Lord's command in the institution of this Holy Sacrament aright by receiving it only now and then. For as they would never have done it all, but only in obedience unto that command, so in obedience to that command they took all opportunities they could get of doing it; at least they never omitted it upon the Lord's Day. But upon that day, whatsoever they did besides, they always did this, in remembrance of what their great Lord and Saviour had done for them. And if we desire to be such Christians as they were, we must do as they did. We must, after their pious example, observe our Lord's command, by eating this bread and drinking this cup as often as we can, lest otherwise we lose the benefit of that death He suffered for us, by our neglecting to do what He hath commanded in remembrance of it. And, verily, to remember Christ and His death is a thing of far greater consequence than people are commonly aware of. The people of God under the Law, by His Own appointment, had it typified and represented to them every day in the year, by having two lambs offered up for a burnt-offering, the one in the morning and the other in the evening, as a type of that Lamb of God "which taketh away the sin of the world." These were offered every day, besides the sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and suchlike, as were offered upon particular occasions. Wherefore, these two lambs were called the continual burnt-offering, as being continually offered every day in the week.

And upon the Sabbath-day there were two more added. So that upon every Sabbath-day in the year there were four lambs offered, that they might be sure at least upon that day to think of that grand sacrifice which was to be offered up for them. And it may not be amiss to observe, that every one of those lambs had a meat and a drink-offering to attend it: a meat-offering made of flour, and a drink-offering of wine; which are both the same elements which Christ Himself instituted to signify His body and blood. And besides the burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, every Sabbath-day, the high-priest was to set the shew-bread upon the holy table, and to put frankincense thereon, which was to continue there before the Lord till the next Sabbath, when the priests had eaten the bread, and burnt the frankincense

Exod. 29.
38; Num.
28. 3; John
1. 29.

Num. 28. 9.

לֶאֱזָכְרָהּ, “for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the Lord.” All which, as most things in the Levitical Law, ^{Levit. 2. 4, 5, &c.; Ex. 25. 30.} had, doubtless, some respect or other to Christ; as is intimated in the Law itself, where it is said, that this shall be done by an “everlasting covenant,” even that which is ^{Lev. 24. 9.} founded in Christ. The bread, consisting of twelve loaves or cakes, according to the number of the tribes of Israel, and of Christ’s Apostles, was set upon the table in two rows, which might put us in mind of the two natures in Christ, “the Bread of Life which came down from Heaven.” In ^{John 6. 33, 35.} Hebrew this is called לֶחֶם פָּנִים, ‘the bread of the faces,’ because it was to be “set before the face of God con- ^{Ex. 25. 30.} tinually,” as Christ “continually appeareth in the presence ^{Heb. 9. 24.} of God for us.” Upon this bread was laid pure frankincense, called in Hebrew לְבוֹנָה, “olibanum,” from its whiteness, by reason whereof it was used in sacrifices as a symbol of God’s pardoning of sin, as it was likewise of His acceptance of what was done by the sweet scent it made when burnt. This was laid upon the bread, to be to it for a memorial, as the Hebrew words signify, to call to remembrance the offering made by fire unto the Lord; that is, the death of Christ typified by all such offerings. The bread was to be eaten, not burnt; but the pure frankincense that was laid upon it was to be burnt, and by its sweet smell call to mind the death of Christ, by virtue whereof God smells a sweet savour, or accepts of the sacrifices and services we offer and perform to Him. And all this was to be done, ^{1 Pet. 2. 5.} the bread to be eaten, the frankincense burnt, and new put in their places every Sabbath-day throughout the year, that upon that day especially men might be put in mind of their Saviour, and accordingly act their faith on Him for their pardon and acceptance with God.

There were many such ways whereby the people of God, in those days, were constantly put in mind of what the Saviour of the world was to do and suffer for them; all which are now laid aside, and only this one Sacrament of His Last Supper instituted by Himself in the room of them. This is now our “Christian shew-bread,” whereby “we shew the Lord’s death till He come.” This is our burnt-offering, our sin-offering, our trespass-offering, our thank-offering, our

meat-offering, our drink-offering, and all the offerings required of us, whereby to commemorate our blessed Saviour, and what He hath done for us. And therefore, as the Jews were punctual and constant in observing all things prescribed to them for the same end, we certainly ought to do this as often as we can ; this one thing which answers the end of all their offerings, and yet hath neither the trouble, nor the charges, nor the difficulty of any one of them.

Especially considering that God would never have appointed so many ways whereby to put them in mind of their Saviour, but that it was necessary for them to have Him always in their minds. And it must needs be as necessary for us as it was for them ; otherwise He Who came into the world on purpose to save us, would never have commanded us to eat this bread and drink this cup in remembrance of Him. But He hath commanded us not only to do it, but to do it for this very end, that we may remember Him. And therefore we may be confident, that to remember Him is very necessary to our being saved by Him ; and by consequence, that all who desire to be so in good earnest, must do this so often, as to keep Him always fresh in their minds and memories. And the reason is plain ; for all the promises of Salvation by Christ are made only to those who believe in Him. But this believing in Him is not a transient act, or a thing to be done only once or twice ; but it is to be the continual work and employment of our lives. As we must constantly believe what He hath taught, so we must constantly trust and depend on Him for all things necessary to our Salvation, according to the promises He hath made us. He that does not do this cannot be truly said to believe in Christ at all ; or at least, not to any purpose. But it is impossible for us thus constantly to believe in Christ, without keeping Him always in our minds ; and it is as impossible for us to keep Him thus always in our minds without frequent receiving of this Holy Sacrament. If we could have done so without it, Christ would never have appointed this Sacrament to put us in mind of Him ; for He need not have done it.

The plain case is this : There is no way whereby it is possible for any of us to be saved but by Jesus Christ ; nor

by Him, without believing in Him. And therefore we had need use all the means we can for the exercising our faith in Him, and keeping it always fixed upon Him. But we can by no means do it so effectually, as by the frequent receiving of that Holy Sacrament which He Himself ordained for that very purpose, that we might remember Him so as to believe and trust on Him for all things relating to our Salvation. For He hath so ordered it, that this Sacrament doth not bring Him into our remembrance only in a slight and superficial manner, without making any impression upon our minds, but it exhibits and presents Him to our very eyes as dying for our sins; or, to use the Apostle's words, "Herein Gal. 3. 1. Jesus Christ is evidently set forth before our eyes as crucified among us," whereby our minds are deeply affected, and our faith confirmed in Him. All the promises which God hath made us in Christ being hereby sealed, as it were, and delivered to us in His blood. As the Sacrament of Circumcision is said to be a "token of the covenant betwixt God Gen. 17. 11. and man," "and a seal of the righteousness of faith," so the Rom. 4. 11. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper both signifies and seals to us the covenant of grace, founded in the death of Christ, there represented before our eyes, whereby our faith is strengthened, and we are able to look upon ourselves as entitled to, and interested in, all the blessings which are promised in the said covenant, by the means of that body and blood which we there behold as broken and shed for us. For which purpose also Christ Himself, in the institution of it, calls the signs by the name of the thing signified, saying, "This is My body which is broken for you, and this is My blood of the New Testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Whereby He fully assures us, that this is not common bread and wine, but His Own body and blood, not in a carnal, but in a spiritual or sacramental sense: so that, by eating this bread and drinking this cup, we partake of His body and blood to all intents and purposes for which the one was broken and the other shed; and that, too, as much, or rather more, than we could have done it by eating His very body and drinking His very blood, in a carnal and literal sense. To the same purpose is that of the Apostle, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is 1 Cor. 10. 16,

1 Cor. 11. 24;
Matt. 26. 28.

it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Though it be not His very body and blood itself, it is the communion of them; they are both communicated to us, so that, if we receive them as we ought by faith, we attain the end wherefore His body was broken and His blood shed, even the remission of our sins; which is, therefore, particularly mentioned by Himself in the institution of the cup.

[Heb. 11.
1.] And this is that which our Church teacheth in her Catechism, saying, 'That the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful, in the Lord's Supper'—by the faithful: by such as have, and act true faith, which, as the Apostle saith, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." By such the body and blood of Christ is verily and indeed received; and only by such. Others see nothing there but bread and wine; but they who have such a faith in Christ's Word, by it see His body and blood there, their faith itself being the very evidence thereof to them. The elements are not transubstantiated into the body and blood of Christ, as the Papists absurdly imagine; but the substance of the bread and wine still continues the same: and therefore, without faith, no man can receive any more than plain, though consecrated, bread and wine. But they who have, and at the same time act, that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, do, by that, verily and indeed receive the body and blood of Christ, according to His Word, when He said, "This is My body, and this is My blood." This Christ said, and this they believe; and by their believing it, have it verified to them. It is to them that body which was broken, and that blood which was shed, for their sins: they receive it as such upon Christ's word, and accordingly partake of all the merits of it, whereby their sins are all as fully remitted to them, as if they themselves had already undergone all the punishments which the Law had threatened against them: for Christ having undergone them all in their stead, and He having now communicated that body and blood in which He did it unto them, and they having by faith accordingly received it, the Law is now satisfied as to them, and

can no more require that they should suffer the punishments which were due unto their sins, than it can require that Christ's body and blood, which they have received, should be broken and shed again for them.

And as Christ here puts us upon the exercise of our faith, by calling what we receive His Own body and blood, so He doth, likewise, by offering and applying it particularly unto us; saying, in the very institution, to the Apostles, and, in them, to every sound member of His Church, "This is My body which is given for you," and, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you." And, therefore, in the distribution both of the bread and cup, according to the order of our Church, the Minister saith to every particular communicant, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life. Take, and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee.' And so in the cup, 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee;' which is much to be observed, as being of mighty use to the right exercising our faith in Christ, and so to our obtaining pardon and Salvation by Him; for Christ is said to have died for mankind in general, and all the promises in Him are made not to this or that particular person, but to all that believe; and so every one is left to apply them as well as he can to himself. But now in this Holy Sacrament this is done to our hands; for here Christ Himself, by His Minister, assures every particular person, singly and by himself, that His body was given for him, and His blood was shed for him or for her: which is an extraordinary help to our faith; for by this means every one, upon the receipt of the Holy Sacrament, hath a fair occasion, yea, reason given him to think thus with himself:—

'My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. Blessed be God, blessed be the eternal Son of God, He Himself is become my Saviour. He loved me, and gave Himself for me, even for me also, the unworthiest of all His creatures. His body was broken, His blood was shed for me, and He hath now given it to me, that my sins may be pardoned, and that my soul may be saved by it. What, then, if my sins be many? what if my

Luke, 22.
19, 20.

[Luke 1. 46,
47.]

sins be great? I confess they are so; they are very many, and they are very great. But I am truly humbled for them, I heartily repent of them; I steadfastly resolve, by God's assistance, never to return any more unto them, but to spend the rest of my life wholly in His service and to His honour. What then need I fear? Shall I fear the curse of the Law?

[Gal. 3. 13.]

My Saviour hath redeemed me from it, being made a curse for me. Shall I fear shame, or pain, or death itself? My Saviour hath suffered them all for me, so that none of them can now come near to hurt me. Shall I fear that sin will still have dominion over me? My Saviour hath overcome it, and His grace shall be sufficient for me. Shall I fear the powers of Hell? My Saviour hath triumphed over them all, and will enable me to do so too. Shall I fear the wrath of God? My Saviour hath appeased it with His Own blood, and so hath restored me to His love and favour: for He died for me. He Himself hath now told me so; and therefore I believe it, and am now persuaded, that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

Rom. 8. 38,
39.

Now, seeing the receiving of the Sacrament of His Last Supper conduceth so very much both to the exercising and strengthening our faith in our blessed Saviour, we, who can never be saved without believing in Him, cannot surely but acknowledge that it is as much our interest, as it is our duty, to receive it as often as we can. For my own part, I do not see how it is possible for us to live either so comfortably or so piously, as becometh those who expect Salvation by Christ, without it. For, first, we cannot but be all conscious to ourselves of the many sins and failures that we are continually subject to through the whole course of our lives. There is not a day passeth over our head without doing something we ought not to do, or else not doing something which we ought. Our thoughts, our affections, our words, our actions, are all one way or other faulty. The very best works we do have something that is not good in them; so that every day we contract new guilt, and have more sins to answer for than we had the day before. But every sin that

we commit exposeth us to the wrath of Almighty God, and makes us obnoxious to all the curses which He hath threatened in His Word; the thoughts whereof cannot but often cut us to the heart, and make us cry out with David, “ Mine Ps. 38. 4. iniquities are gone over my head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me to bear.” But what then shall we do? Whither shall we go for ease? Where can we find any rest and quiet for our troubled minds? Nowhere certainly so well as at our Lord’s Table. It is only He that can give rest unto our souls, and it is there He doeth it most effectually; for He there acquaints us that He Himself hath borne the punishment of our sins, and shews us how He did it, even by giving His body to be broken and His blood to be shed for them. We there see that the Son of God died for the sins of the world, and for ours among the rest. Yea, He there tells us He did so, by saying, “ Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you, and this is My blood which is shed for you,”—for you, and for your sins, as well as for any other; as if He should say to every particular person by Himself, ‘ Behold, and see what I have done, and what I have suffered for thee. It was for thee that I assumed a human body and blood; and this body I gave to be broken, this blood I gave to be shed for thee, and I now give it to thee for the expiation of thy sins; therefore, be of good cheer, My son, thy sins are pardoned: only be not faithless, but believing.’

He that thinks not this to be a great comfort, must needs be very much hardened in his sins, so as not to feel the burden of them; for he that doeth that, as all true penitents be sure do, cannot but be highly pleased with any assurance that can be given him that his sins are pardoned; much more with the greatest he can ever have on this side Heaven, even that which is given in the Holy Sacrament, where his pardon is sealed with the blood of Christ, and delivered to him by His officers; and therefore such a one cannot but be always longing for an opportunity of receiving it, and embrace it with all his heart wheresoever it comes, although it be every day in the week, as the Primitive Christians had it, for this very reason, even because of their daily sins, as St. Cyprian informs us, ‘ De Oratione Dominicâ.’ But in our [P. 149. Oxon.]

age the case is altered. Once a-week is now thought too much. And I do not deny, but that they who can live a whole week together without sin, may not have so much need of receiving it so often. But where shall we find such a man? Not among us, be sure. We all know that we sin in thought, word, or deed, every day in the week, if not every hour in the day too; and therefore, if we have any care of our souls, if any true sorrow for our sins, if any desire to obtain the pardon of them from the hands of God, we must catch at all the opportunities we can get of receiving that blessed Sacrament, where it is offered to us by Christ Himself, and that too upon the most easy terms that can be imagined, nothing but repentance and faith in him.

Neither is this all. For we are sensible, not only of our manifold sins, but likewise of the cause or occasion of them, even the corruption of our nature: which is so very much [2Cor.3.5.] disordered and out of tune, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, much less to do any thing that is truly good; but when we would do good, evil is present with us, and spoils all we do: so that Rom. 7. 18. we may every one say, with St. Paul, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." But how to perform that which is evil, we all find. We all find that very easy and natural to us. Our thoughts are always running after it, our hearts inclined to it; and do what we can by our own strength, some sin or other is apt to get dominion over us, and to reign in our mortal bodies. Yea, though "we delight," as the same ver. 22, 23. Apostle speaks, "in the Law of God after the inward man," yet "we see another law in our members, warring against the law of our minds, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin, which is in our members." And if we be really concerned, as we ought to be, for the glory of God, and for our own good, this must needs be the greatest trouble we can have in this world, and make us cry out, every one, in the ver. 24. bitterness of his soul, as he did, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But ver. 25. then we may say also, as he doth in the next words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He can deliver

us, and will too, if we do but apply ourselves aright unto Him for it. But for that purpose there is nothing like to the frequent receiving His blessed body and blood. Our very preparation for that Holy Sacrament, by recollecting our sins, by considering what we have deserved, and what our Saviour suffered for them, and by examining our repentance of them, whether it be sincere or not, doth of itself contribute very much to the taking off our affections from them, and to the putting us upon constant endeavours to forsake and avoid them. And so do the impressions also which the solemn administration of so Divine an ordinance makes, and leaves upon our minds afterwards, by setting before us the death which the Son of God suffered for our sins, and assuring us of pardon if we repent of them. By which means they who frequently receive this Holy Sacrament, as suppose every Lord's Day, are always kept upon their guard, between the preparations they make for it, and the impressions that are made upon them by it. Which, if duly observed, must needs meet together, and so give them no time to indulge themselves in any vice or wickedness. For being to receive it upon the Lord's Day, they cannot surely but think of it, and prepare themselves for it two or three days before; and when they have been there, they cannot but remember what they saw and heard, and did there, at least three or four days after, and so to the time when they are to prepare themselves again for it. Whereby their minds are piously disposed and employed all the week, either about what they did the Sunday before, or what they are to do the Sunday following. Which must needs conduce very much to the arming them against all temptations, to the preventing their falling into any gross sin, and to the keeping them continually in a holy and devout temper.

But that which doeth it most effectually of all, is the ghostly strength they receive at the Sacrament itself. Where, as our Church rightly observes and asserts in her Catechism, 'Our souls are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine.' Meat and drink, we know, are by God's Own appointment the common supports of human life. Of all meats, bread is

reckoned the most strengthening ; of all drinks, wine is the most refreshing. Now, as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by these, which are there used as the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper ; so are our souls by the thing signified by them, even by the body and blood of Christ, which, as I have shewn, are there ' verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful.' It is a great refreshment to our souls, as we have seen already, to have the pardon of our sins sealed and delivered to us, as it is there, in the blood of Christ. And our souls are as much strengthened by the grace of God, which always follows upon His pardon and reconciliation to us, and accompanieth the body and blood of Christ, wheresoever it is. And therefore, all who duly receive it, do thereby receive it from Him, "and grace for grace," and so go from strength to strength, till they " come to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

John 1. 16.

Eph. 4. 13.

John 6. 35.

ver. 51.

ver. 54-57.

ver. 63.

Let us hear what He Himself saith, " I am the Bread of Life," saith He, " he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst." " I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." " Whosoever eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life : for My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed : he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." But then He adds, afterwards, " It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." As if He had said, ' All that I have now spoken is to be understood in a spiritual sense and of a spiritual life. I am the life of your souls : it is by My body and My blood that your souls are quickened, nourished, strengthened, and preserved to eternal life.'

For this we have Christ's Own word, and therefore may be confident, that as it is by Him only that we can be regenerate and born again to a new and spiritual life, so it is by

Him only that this new and spiritual life can be maintained and excited in us, so as to put forth and manifest itself in our actions. "Without Him we can do nothing," as He John 15. 5. Himself said, but "we can do all things through Christ Phil. 4. 13. Which strengtheneth us," as His Apostle found by experience. But He strengthens none but those who believe in Him, and therefore only because they do so. For it is by our believing in Him that we are made members of His body, and so receive strength and nourishment from Him our Head. And according as our faith is stronger or weaker, so is the strength we receive from Him more or less. And therefore the Holy Sacrament being the most sovereign means for the confirming our faith in Him, our souls must needs be very much strengthened and refreshed by it. For we there receive the proper food of our souls, the bread of life and the water of life, the blessed body and blood of Christ Himself. And if His body and blood, then His Spirit too, which is always with them; that Holy Spirit which purifies our hearts, which sanctifies our nature, which worketh in us both to will and to do, which strengthens and enables us to overcome the world, to withstand temptations, to mortify our sins, to do our whole duty both to God and man, and so "offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God 1 Pet. 2. 5. through Jesus Christ our Lord."

From hence, therefore, we may see the great advantage, if not the necessity, of frequent communion. We all know that our bodies cannot subsist long, but very few days, without food. And why should we think that our souls should do so better than our bodies? We all find by daily experience, that our souls are altogether as frail and infirm as our bodies are; subject to as many distempers, and every way as apt to decay, to grow faint and feeble, unable to walk at all in the narrow path that leads to life, without stumbling, or at least reeling to one side or other, unless they be always kept in good plight, nourished and strengthened with such food as is proper for them. And certainly we have as much reason, at least, to take care of our immortal souls, to preserve their life, and health, and vigour, as we have to look after those lumps of clay which ere long must crumble into dust. But as for our bodies, we feed

them every day, several times a-day, and that too with the best that we can get for them. And shall we think once a-week too often to feed our souls? And where shall we get such proper food for them as that which God Himself hath provided, even the blessed body and blood of His dear Son? which is so nourishing, so strengthening, so refreshing to our souls, that the Primitive Christians, by the frequent use of it, were able and ready, every moment, not only to do, but to suffer cheerfully whatsoever could be laid upon them, even death itself, for the sake of Christ. But the Sacrament is the same still as it was then. And if we could use it as constantly as they did, we might live as they lived, and die too, if God should be pleased to honour us so far as to call us to it, for His sake who died for us, and Whose death we there commemorate.

Wherefore, as ever we desire to be strong in faith, and [Eph.6.16.] zealous for the honour of God; — as we desire “to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked;” — as we desire to crucify [Gal.5.24.] the flesh with the affections and lusts; — as we desire to live above this world, so as not to be ensnared or overpowered by any thing that is in it; — as we desire that the power of Christ should always rest upon us, and enable us to [Luke1.6.] walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless; — in short, as we desire, by His assistance, both to live the life and to die the death of the righteous, — we must often eat this bread, and drink this cup, and bless God for all opportunities that we can get to do it.

These are some of the many arguments and reasons that might be produced for frequent communion. What effect they will have upon those that hear them, I know not; but fear that it will be much the same that reason and argument usually have upon the greatest part of mankind; that is, very little, or none at all. But for mine own part, when I seriously consider these things, I cannot but wonder with myself how it comes to pass, that this Holy Sacrament, instituted by Christ Himself, is so much neglected and disused as it is, in a place where His religion is professed and acknowledged to be, as really it is, the only true religion in the world. And after all my search, I can resolve it into nothing else but the degeneracy of the age we live

in, and the great decay of that most holy religion amongst us. I am sure, from the beginning it was not so. For some ages after the first establishment of the Christian religion by Christ our Saviour, so long as they who embraced it gave themselves up to the conduct of that Holy Spirit which He sent down among them, and were inspired by it with true zeal for God, and inflamed with love to their ever-blessed Redeemer, so as to observe all things that He had commanded, whatsoever it cost them, then they never met together upon any day in the week, much less upon the Lord's Day, for the public worship of God, but they all received this Holy Sacrament, as the principal business they met about, and the most proper Christian service they could perform. And it is very observable, that so long as this continued, men were endued with the extraordinary gifts as well as with the graces of God's Holy Spirit, so as to be able to do many wonderful things by it: yea, and suffer too whatsoever could be inflicted on them for Christ's sake. But in process of time men began to leave off their first love to Him, and to turn His religion into dispute and controversy; and then, as their piety and devotion grew cooler and cooler, the Holy Sacrament began to be neglected more and more, and the priests who administered it had fewer and fewer to receive it, until, at length, they had sometimes none at all. But still they took themselves to be obliged in duty and conscience to consecrate and receive it themselves, although they had none to receive with them. And this mistake, I suppose, gave the first occasion to that multitude of private masses which have been so much abused in the Church of Rome, where the priest commonly receives himself, although he hath never a one to communicate with him: and so there can be no communion at all. And as that abuse, so the disuse of the Holy Sacrament, sprang first from men's coldness and indifferency in religion, which hath prevailed so far in our days, that there are many thousands of persons who are baptized, and live many years in the profession of the Christian religion, and yet never received the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood in all their lives; and but very few that receive it above once or twice a-year, which is a great reproach and shame to the age

we live in ; but none at all to the Church : for she is always ready to administer it, if people could be persuaded to come to it. But that they cannot, or rather will not be : they have still one pretence or other to excuse themselves, but none that will excuse them before God and their own consciences another day.

What their pretences are, I shall not undertake to determine. They are so many, that they cannot easily be numbered ; and many of them so vain and trifling, that they are not worth rehearsing. But the bottom of them all is this, men renounced the world, the Devil, and the flesh, in their baptism, but they are loth to do it in their lives : they then promised to serve God, but now they find something else to do. They have all one sin or other that reigns over them, and captivates their hearts and affections, so that they cannot endure the thoughts of parting with it ; and they think, as they ought to do, that if they come to the Holy Sacrament, they must first examine themselves, repent of all their sins, turn to God, renew their baptismal vow, and resolve to lead a new life. But this they are resolved not to do ; and if they should come to the Sacrament, it would but disturb their quiet, make them uneasy in their minds, and hinder them from enjoying the pleasure they were wont to take in their sins ; and for their part, they had rather displease God than themselves, and neglect their duty rather than leave their sins ; and so add sin to sin, and

[Rom.2.5.] “treasure up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” This is plainly the case of most of those who live in the neglect of this holy commandment ; and what can be said to such men ? So long as such, they are not fit to come to the Communion ; and therefore all that can be said to them is only to beg of them to consider their condition before it be too late, and to repent as soon as they can ; lest they die, as they have lived, in sin, and so be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

[2 Thess. 1.
9.]

But there are others who do receive the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood sometimes, as perhaps two or three times in a year ; and my charity prompts me to believe that

they would do it oftener, if they thought it to be their duty. But there are some things which, at first sight, may seem, at least to them, to plead their excuse, and therefore deserve to be duly considered by us: as, first, they say our Church requires them only to receive three times a-year; and they do not question but she would oblige them to receive it oftener if it was necessary. This is a mistake that a great many have fallen into, and by that means have been kept from the Sacrament more than otherwise they would have been. I call it a mistake; for it is so, and a very great one. For, as in all things else, so particularly in this, our Church keeps close to the pattern of the Apostolic and Primitive Church; when, as I have before observed, the Lord's Supper was administered and received commonly every day in the week, but most constantly upon the Lord's Day: and our Church supposeth it to be so still, and therefore hath accordingly made provision for it. Which that I may fully demonstrate to you, it will be necessary to inquire into the sense and practice of our Church in this point all along from the beginning of the Reformation; or, to speak more properly, from the time when she was restored to that Apostolical form which she is now of, as she was at first; which we date from the reign of King Edward VI.

For in the first year of that pious prince, the Liturgy, or Book of Common Prayer, was first compiled, and in the second, it was settled by Act of Parliament. In which book, it is ordered that the exhortation to those who are minded to receive the Sacrament shall be read; which is there set down, much the same that we read now. But afterwards it is said, 'In cathedral churches, or other places where there is daily communion, it shall be sufficient to read this exhortation above written once in a month; and in parish churches, upon the week-days, it may be left unsaid.' Where we may observe, first, that in those days there was daily communion in cathedral churches, and other places, as there used to be in the Primitive Church. And accordingly, I find in the records of St. Paul's, that when the plate, jewels, &c., belonging to the said cathedral, were delivered to the king's commissioners, they, upon the dean and chapter's request,

Dugdale's
Hist. of St.
Paul's, p.
274.

permitted to remain, among other things, 'two pair of basins for to bring the communion-bread, and to receive the offerings for the poor; whereof one pair silver, for every day; the other, for festivals, &c. gilt.' From whence it is plain, that the Communion was then celebrated in that Church every day; and so it was even in parish churches: for otherwise it needed not to be ordered, as it is in the Rubric above-mentioned, that in parish churches, upon the week-days, the said exhortation may be left unsaid. And to the same purpose it is afterwards said, 'When the Holy Communion is celebrated on the work-day, or in private houses, then may be omitted the Gloria in Excelsis, the Creed, the Homily, and the Exhortation.'

Fol. 132.

Next, after that we quoted first, this Rubric immediately follows, 'And if upon the Sunday or holyday, the people be negligent to come to the Communion, then shall the priest earnestly exhort his parishioners to dispose themselves to the receiving of the Holy Communion more diligently, saying,' &c. Which shews that upon all Sundays and holydays people then generally received: the Church expected and required it of them. And if any minister found that his parishioners did not always come, at least upon those days, he was to exhort and admonish them to dispose themselves more diligently for it; and that by the command of the Church itself, whereby she hath sufficiently declared her will and desire, that all her members should receive the Communion as they did in the primitive times, every day in the week, if possible: and if that could not be, yet at least every Sunday and holyday in the year.

Fol. 130.

In the Rubric, after the Communion-service, there are several things to the same purpose. For it is there ordered, that upon Wednesdays and Fridays, 'although there be none to communicate,' the priest shall say all things at the altar appointed to be said at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, until after the offertory: and then it follows, 'And the same order shall be used, whensoever the people be customably assembled to pray in the Church, and none disposed to communicate with the priest.' Whereby we are given to understand, that upon what day soever people came

to Church, the priest was to be ready to celebrate the Holy Sacrament if any were disposed to communicate with him. And if there were none, he was to shew his readiness, by reading a considerable part of the Communion-service.

There is another Rubric, in the same place, that makes it still plainer; which I shall transcribe, because the book is not commonly to be had, neither can it be expressed better than in its words, which are these: ‘Also, that the receiving of the Sacrament of the blessed body and blood of Christ may be most agreeable to the institution thereof, and to the usage of the Primitive Church, in all cathedral and collegiate churches, there shall always some communicate with the priest that ministereth. And that the same may be also observed every where abroad in the country, some one at the least of that house in every parish, to whom by course, after the Ordinance herein made, it appertaineth to offer for the charges of the Communion, or some other whom they shall provide to offer for them, shall receive the Holy Communion with the priest: the which may be the better done, for that they know before when their course cometh, and may therefore dispose themselves to the worthy receiving of the Sacrament. And with him or them, who doth so offer the charges of the Communion, all other who be then godly disposed thereunto, shall likewise receive the Communion. And by this means the Minister having always some to communicate with him, may accordingly solemnize so high and holy mysteries, with all the suffrages and due order appointed for the same. And the priest on the week-day shall forbear to celebrate the Communion, except he have some that will communicate with him.’

Here we see what care the Church took that the Sacrament might be daily administered, not only in cathedral, but likewise in parish churches. For which purpose, whereas every parishioner had before been used to find the holy loaf, as it was called, in his course, in the Rubric before this it is ordained, that every pastor or curate shall find sufficient bread and wine for the Communion, and that the parishioners, every one in his course, shall offer the charges of it at the offertory to the pastor or curate; and in this it is ordained, that every such parishioner shall then in his course commu-

nicate, or else get some other person to do it, that so the Communion may be duly celebrated; and all there present that were godly disposed might partake of it: which one would have thought as good a provision as could have been made in the case. But notwithstanding, through the obstinacy or carelessness of some, in not making their said offerings as they were commanded, it sometimes failed; as appears from the letter, written about a year after, by the Privy Council, and subscribed by the Archbishop of Canterbury and others, to the bishops, to assure them that the king intended to go on with the Reformation; wherein among other things they say, ‘And farther, whereas it is come to our knowledge that divers froward and obstinate persons do refuse to pay towards the finding of bread and wine for the Holy Communion, according to the order prescribed in the said book, by reason whereof the Holy Communion is many times omitted upon the Sunday: these are to will and command you to convent such obstinate persons before you, and them to admonish and command to keep the order prescribed in the said book. And if any such shall refuse so to do, to punish them by suspension, excommunication, or other censures of the Church.’ From whence we may also learn how much they were troubled to hear that the Holy Sacrament was any where omitted even upon the Sunday, upon any Sunday; how great a fault and scandal they judged it to be, and what care they took to prevent it for the future.

This was the state of this affair at the beginning of the Reformation, and it continues in effect the same to this day. About three or four years after the aforesaid Book of Common Prayer first came out, it was revised and set forth again with some alterations in the form, but none that were material in the substance of it. Only the former way of the parishioners finding bread and wine for the Communion, every one in his course, being now found not so effectual as was expected, that was now laid aside, and it was ordered to be provided at the charges of the parish in general, in these words: ‘The bread and wine for the Communion shall be provided by the curate and churchwardens, at the charges of the parish: and the parish shall be discharged of such sums of money or other duties, which hitherto they have paid for the

same, by order of their houses, every Sunday.' Where we may take notice, that as hitherto it had been provided every Sunday by the houses of every parish, as they lay in order, it was now to be provided by the minister and churchwarden at the charges of the whole parish, but still every Sunday, as it was before; which being the most certain way that could be found out for it, it is still continued. The first part of this Rubric, whereby it is enjoined, being still in force. But the latter part, from these words, 'And the parish shall be discharged,' &c. is now left out, as it was necessary it should be, after the former course had been disused for above a hundred years.

Now this Book of Common Prayer, which was thus settled by Act of Parliament, in the fifth and sixth years of Edward the Sixth, was that which was afterwards confirmed. And this was that which was afterwards confirmed in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, with one alteration, or addition of certain lessons to be used on every Sunday in the year, and the form of the Litany altered and corrected, and two sentences only added in the delivery of the Sacrament to the communicants. These were all the alterations that were then made, or indeed that have been ever made, since that time to this, except it be in words or phrases, in the addition of some prayers, and in some such inconsiderable things as do not at all concern our present purpose. For the care of our Church to have the Holy Communion constantly celebrated, hath been the same all along, from the time that the Book of Common Prayer before spoken of was first settled; as may be easily proved from that which was established by the last Act of Uniformity. Which, therefore, I shall now briefly consider, so far as it relates to the business in hand; that we may understand the sense of our Church at present concerning it.

For this purpose, therefore, we may first observe, that the Communion-service is appointed for the Communion itself, and therefore called the 'Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion.' Now, our Church, supposing or at least hoping that some of her members will receive this Holy Communion every day, hath taken care that this service may be used every day in the

week, as appears from the Rubric immediately before the proper lessons, which is this: 'Note also, that the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel appointed for the Sunday, shall serve all the week after, where it is not in this book otherwise ordered.' But the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, are part of the Communion-service, for which there is no occasion on the week-days, neither can it be used except the Communion be administered; which, therefore, is here supposed to be done every day in the week. And so it is also in the celebration of the Communion itself where there are proper prefaces appointed to be used upon certain days; upon Christmas-day, and seven days after; upon Easter-day, and seven days after; upon Ascension-day, and seven days after; upon Whit-Sunday, and six days after (the next day being Trinity-Sunday, which hath one peculiar to itself). Now to what purpose are these prefaces appointed to be used seven days together, or six, none of which can be a Sunday, if the Sacrament ought not to be administered upon all those days, and so upon week-days as well as Sundays? They are all, as I intimated before, to be used in the actual administration of it, and therefore plainly suppose it to be actually administered upon each of those days; which, being for the most part neither Sundays nor holydays, they most evidently demonstrate, that, according to the mind and order of our Church, as well as the Primitive, the Lord's Supper ought to be administered every day, that all who live as they ought, in her Communion, may be daily partakers of it.

In the rules and orders (which we call the 'Rubric') after the Communion-service, there are several things that deserve to be considered in this case. It is there ordered, that there shall be no celebration of the Communion, except there be a convenient number, that is, four, or three at the least, to communicate with the priest. According to which rule, although the priest have all things ready, and desires to consecrate and receive the Holy Sacrament himself, yet he must not do it, unless he have such a number to communicate with him, that it may be properly a Communion. But, as it is there ordered, 'upon the Sundays and other holydays (if there be no Communion) shall be

said all that is appointed at the Communion until the end of the general prayer (for the good estate of the Catholic Church of Christ),’ where we may observe that the Church, as I have shewn, appoints the Sacrament to be administered every day. But if it so fall out, that there be not in any place a convenient number to communicate with the priest, and by consequence, according to the order beforementioned, no Communion; yet, nevertheless, upon Sundays and other holydays, so much of the Communion-service shall be said as is there limited. Why only upon Sundays and holydays but to distinguish them from other days; on which, if there be a sufficient number of communicants, the whole Communion-service is to be used; but no part of it, except there be so? But upon Sundays and holydays, although there be not such a number, and therefore no Communion, yet, however, the priest shall go up to the altar, and there read all that is appointed to be said at the Communion, until the end of the prayer for Christ’s Catholic Church, whereby the people may see, that neither he nor the Church is to be blamed, if the Holy Sacrament be not then administered. Forasmuch as he is there ready by the order of the Church to do it, and goes as far as he can in the service appointed for it, without the actual administration of it: and therefore, that the fault is wholly in themselves, that it is not actually administered, because they will not make up a convenient number among them to communicate with him; which is a most excellent order; for the people hereby have not only God’s Holy Commandments solemnly proclaimed, the Epistle and Gospel for the day, the Nicene Creed, and Prayers proper for that occasion read to them, but they are likewise put in mind of their duty to their Saviour in receiving His most blessed body and blood, and upbraided with their neglect of it. For which purposes also, I think it very expedient, that the order of the Church for the reading that part of the service at the Communion-table, even when there is no Communion, be duly observed.

The next Rubric in the same place, that concerns our present business, is this, ‘And in all cathedral and collegiate churches, and colleges, where there are many priests and deacons, they shall all receive the Communion with the

priest every Sunday at the least, except they have a reasonable cause to the contrary.' Where we see that the Church doth not command, but supposes that the Sacrament is constantly administered in all such places, taking it for granted that it is never omitted there, where there are so many persons devoted to the service of God, but that there is always a sufficient number to communicate. But she absolutely commands, that all priests and deacons that belong to such foundations shall receive the Communion with the priest every Sunday at the least, except any of them have a reasonable cause to the contrary, which the Ordinary of the place (I suppose) is to be judge of. They are bound, therefore, all and every one of them, to receive it every Sunday; which, notwithstanding, they cannot do, unless it be administered every Sunday among them. Wherefore, if there be any such places where it is not so administered, or any such persons who do not, without just cause to the contrary, receive it every Sunday in the year, I do not see how they can answer it to God, to the Church, or to their own consciences. Neither are they bound to receive it only every Sunday, but every Sunday at the least; which plainly supposeth that it is administered upon other days as well as Sundays; for otherwise they could not receive it oftener if they would. And it is to be hoped, that all such persons receive it as often as it is administered among them. But the Church expressly requires them to receive it at least every Sunday, so as never to omit it at least upon that day, except they have a reasonable or such a cause to the contrary as will justify their omission of it before the Church and Christ Himself, at the Last Day. These things being thus briefly explained, we shall easily see into the true meaning of the words that gave us the occasion to discourse of them, which are these, in the place last quoted, 'And note, that every parishioner shall communicate at the least three times in the year, of which Easter to be one.' From whence some have been tempted to think, that the Church doth not look upon it as necessary, that they should communicate above thrice a-year. I say, 'tempted to think' so: for no man, surely, in his right wits, can of himself draw such an inference from these words, which is so

directly contrary to the sense of the Church, and hath no foundation at all in the words themselves. For the Church, as I have shewn, hath taken all the care she can, that the Holy Sacrament should be every where administered, if it was possible, every day, at least every Sunday and holyday in the year, which she would never have done, if she had thought it sufficient for any one to receive only thrice a-year; for then all her care about the frequent administration of it would be in vain, and to no purpose. And, besides, she hath drawn up an excellent exhortation to be read by the Minister of every parish, in case he sees the people negligent to come to the Holy Communion, beginning thus: ‘Dearly beloved, on —— I intend, by God’s grace, to celebrate the Lord’s Supper.’ Where we may observe that it is not said, on such a Sunday, but on —— with a blank, to shew that the Minister may appoint the Communion on any day of the week, when he can have a sufficient number to communicate with him; and so it is in the other exhortation, only there is ‘day’ put in, which may be understood of Tuesday or Wednesday, or any other day as well as Sunday for the same reason. In that first mentioned, the Minister, in the words and by the order of the Church, invites all there present, and beseecheth them, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, to come to the Lord’s Supper. And among other things, he saith to them all, ‘I bid you in the Name of God, I call you in Christ’s behalf, I exhort you as you love your own Salvation, that ye will be partakers of this Holy Communion.’ There are several such pathetic expressions in that exhortation, wherewith the Church most earnestly exhorts, adviseth, admonisheth, all persons to come to this Holy Sacrament. And this exhortation every Minister is to read publicly before all his congregation, whensoever he sees them negligent to come to it; as all are, who come but two or three times a-year, where they may have it oftener if they will. They plainly live in the neglect of it, and therefore ought to have this exhortation read to them according to the order of the Church; whereby she hath sufficiently demonstrated, that she doth not think it enough for people generally to receive it only three times in a year; but that it is her opinion that they ought, and

her hearty desire they would, receive it as often as it is, or, according to her order, ought to be administered among them.

But, then, she wisely considers withal, that being a National Church, made up of all sorts of persons, it is necessary that her general rules and orders should be accommodated, as much as possible, to the several conditions and circumstances that many of them may be sometimes in. And, therefore, although she exhorts all her members to frequent and constant Communion, yet she doth not think fit to command and oblige them all, under the pain of excommunication, to receive oftener than three times a-year, lest some might be thereby tempted to come sometimes without that preparation and disposition of mind that is requisite to the worthy partaking of so great a mystery. I say, ‘under pain of excommunication;’ for that is the meaning and the effect of this law, that they, who do not communicate at least three times in a year, may and ought to be cast out of the Communion of Christ’s Church, as no longer fit to be called Christians, seeing they live in such a gross neglect of Christ’s Own command, and of that duty whereby Christians are in an especial manner distinguished from other men. Other men, as Jews, Turks, and Heathens, may fast and pray, and hear sermons in their way; but to receive the Sacrament of Christ’s Supper, is proper and peculiar only to Christians, or such as profess that religion which Jesus Christ hath settled in the world. And, therefore, they who receive that Sacrament do thereby manifest themselves to be Christians; they who do it not make it at least doubtful whether they be Christians or not. For although they were baptized, and so made Christians once, who knows whether they have not renounced their Baptism, and apostatized from the Christian religion? They themselves, perhaps, may profess they have not, but the Church can never know it, but hath just cause to suspect the contrary, so long as they refuse to renew the vow they made in the Sacrament of Baptism, by receiving that of the Lord’s Supper. And the least that can be required of them for that purpose is, to do it three times a-year; which, therefore, the Church absolutely requires: not that it is not necessary for

them to receive it oftener in order to their Salvation, but because it is necessary they should do it at least so often, that the Church may be satisfied that they continue in her Communion, and constant to that religion wherein alone Salvation can be had.

And hence it is, that in the rule itself, it is not said, that ‘every person,’ but ‘every parishioner,’ shall communicate at the least three times in the year. Which, therefore, is required of all; not as they are members only of the Catholic, but as they are members of a Parochial Church; and they are bound by this law to do it at least so often in their own parish church, where they are parishioners: otherwise they do not do it as parishioners, as the law requires. So that, although a man communicates a hundred times in any other place, as in the cathedral, which is free to all of the diocese, or in a chapel of ease, or in any other church, when he cannot have it at his own, this doth not satisfy the law: but he must communicate, at least, three times in the year, as a parishioner, in his own parish church, where there are officers, called church-wardens, appointed on purpose to take notice of it, and to inform the Church against him, if he neglect to do it so often as she requires; that she may use the most effectual means to bring him to repentance for his sin, and to make him more careful for the future, to perform so great and necessary a duty as this is; or, if he continue obstinate, cut him off from the body of Christ, as no longer worthy to be called a member of it. And, therefore, all that can be reasonably inferred from this law is, that the Church doth not think them fit to communicate at all, who will not communicate at least three times in the year. But as for her opinion, of the necessity of communicating oftener, in order to men’s obtaining eternal Salvation by the blood of Christ, that she hath sufficiently declared, by the great care she hath taken to have this holy Sacrament administered constantly, as often as it was in the Apostles’ and primitive times of Christianity; that is, as often as any Christian can desire to have it. For, according to the order and discipline of our Church, if a sufficient number of parishioners, against whom there is no just exception, desire to receive it every Sunday, or every day in

the year, the Minister of their parish not only may, but, as I humbly conceive, is bound to consecrate and administer it to them: the want of such a number being, as far as I can perceive, the only reason that can ever justify the omission of it.

I have endeavoured to set this matter in as clear a light as I could, because it will discover to us several things very observable concerning the Church we live in. For hereby we see how exactly she follows the pattern of the Primitive and Apostolic Church in this particular, as well as others: what great care she hath taken, that the bread and water of life may be duly distributed to all her members, whensoever they hunger and thirst after it: with how great prudence she hath so ordered it, that all may have it as often as they will, and yet none compelled to receive it oftener than it is absolutely necessary, in order to their manifesting themselves to continue in the faith of Christ: how desirous she is that all would receive it constantly, and yet how careful that none may receive it unworthily: how uniform she hath been in her orders about it all along: and, by consequence, what cause we all have to bless God, that we live in the Communion of such a Church; and how much it behoves us to receive the Holy Communion of her, not only as often as she strictly commands all to receive it, under the pain of excommunication, but as often as she adviseth and exhorteth us to do it in order to our eternal salvation, and as she is ready and desirous to communicate it to us. And then we should be sure to receive it as often as we are bound, either in duty to God, or by our own interest, to do it.

Another reason why many do not oftener eat this bread and drink this cup, is because, as they pretend, they dare not, for fear of sinning against God, and incurring eternal damnation by it. For the Apostle, in this very place, saith,

1 Cor. 11. 27.

ver. 29.

“ Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” And “ he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.” But they cannot but acknowledge themselves to be unworthy of it; and if they should do it

often, they might sometime do it unworthily, and so might hazard their salvation by it. This is a mistake that many have lain under; and therefore it will be worth our while to lay it as open as we can, that people may see into the vanity and falsehood of it.

First, therefore, if there be any force in this argument against frequent Communion, it holds as well against ever communicating at all. For if every unworthy person that presumes to eat this bread, and drink this cup, and every one that doth it any way unworthily, is thereby rendered obnoxious to eternal damnation, then all would be so that ever eat and drink it at all; forasmuch as no man is worthy of any, much less of so great a mercy as that is, neither can any man do any, much less so great a work as that is, every way so exactly as he ought. And therefore, no man, according to this opinion, can ever obey this command of his Saviour, without running the hazard of losing his salvation by it; which is such a groundless and vain conceit, that I wonder how it first came into any man's head. For it is the same as to imagine, that He Who came into the world on purpose to save us, should require us to do that, in order to our Salvation, which we can never do without being damned; which is so absurd, that whatsoever is, this, be sure, cannot be the Apostle's meaning in those words.

Neither, indeed, can the words themselves bear any such sense, without plain force and violence put upon them; for the Apostle doth not here speak of the unworthiness of the person, but of the action. He doth not say, 'If any unworthy person shall eat this bread and drink this cup;' for all are unworthy, and they usually the most, who think themselves the least—and they least, who think themselves the most unworthy. But he saith, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily," or after an unworthy manner, unbecoming so great and sacred a duty as that is; and what this unworthy manner of receiving the Holy Sacrament was, which he here speaks of, appears plainly from the context. He is here reproving the Corinthians for some disorders that were among them, and particularly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. For, first of all, saith he, "When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among 1 Cor. 11. 18.

you, and I partly believe it." It seems there were divisions among them, not only in other places, but in the church itself; nor at other times only, but likewise when they were receiving the Holy Communion itself; and then he adds,

1 Cor. 11. 20-22. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper; for in eating every one taketh before [other] his own supper, and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not," or are poor? Where we may observe, that they came together, as I have observed before, to eat the Lord's Supper; that was the end, as they pretended, of their meeting, but as they ordered the business, they did not do it; they did not eat the Lord's Supper, but their own. Some ate but little, so as to be still hungry; others ate and drank so much as to be drunken, and that in the church itself. For that they ate their own supper there, appears from the Apostle's calling it their own, and not the Lord's Supper, and also from his saying in the next verse, "What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in, or despise ye the Church of God," making as if that was but like one of your own houses, where ye eat and drink every day? And, lastly, from the direction he afterwards gives them how to amend this fault, saying, "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another: and if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation," or judgment. This, therefore, is the thing which the Apostle here condemns. They had got, it seems, a wicked custom among them to bring their own ordinary food to the church, and to eat and drink it there; and because they did it in the church, they looked upon it as the Lord's Supper, or at least ate that there no otherwise than they used to eat their own at home; without shewing any respect to Christ's mystical body and blood, or making any difference between His supper and their own, but only that they ate the one in the church and the other at their own houses; which was a great mistake and fault; for which the Apostle meekly reproves them, saying, "What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." And then he gives them the reason why he could not praise, but

ver. 33, 34.

ver. 22.

blame them for it, even because the Lord's Supper was instituted by the Lord Christ Himself, to keep up the remembrance of Himself in the Church, to their ignorance of which he, in great charity, imputes their fault; not doubting, but that if they had known the nature and end of that Holy Sacrament, they would have set a greater value upon it; and therefore, perceiving that they did not rightly understand what he had before delivered to them about it, he fully declares it again to them, saying, "For I have received of ver. 23-25. the Lord," &c. After which, having acquainted them in my text, how this is done in remembrance of Christ, even by shewing forth His death, he draws this inference from it: wherefore "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this ver. 27. cup [of the Lord] unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," which therefore must needs be understood of that unworthy manner of doing it, which he before spoke of, and which gave him the occasion of saying it, even their eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord after the same manner as they ate and drank at home, without expressing any reverence to the Holy Sacrament, or to Christ's body and blood there represented; and therefore he saith, that whosoever doeth so, "is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" that is, he is guilty of profaning Christ's mystical body and blood, crucifying, as it were, to himself, "the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an Heb. 6. 6. open shame," by eating His body and drinking His blood as common things, and so exposing Him to contempt and scorn.

That this is the true meaning of the phrase, appears also from the next verse but one, where it occurs again: "For 1 Cor. 11. 29. he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," 'not discerning,' that is, not considering whose body it is, nor making any difference between that and their ordinary food, as the original word *διακρίνων* plainly imports. This, therefore, is that unworthy receiving which the Apostle here particularly condemneth: when men come to the Lord's Table, and receive the outward signs of bread and wine, without discerning by faith the Lord's body signified by them, and therefore without shewing any more regard and

reverence to what they eat and drink there, than they do to any other meat and drink: which horrid sin, although the Corinthians fell into it before they fully understood the nature and end of Christ's institution, yet I hope few are guilty of it amongst us, now that the institution of this Holy Sacrament is so clearly delivered and explained by the Apostle in this place. They seem to come nearest to it who sit at the Lord's Table as they do at their own, and receive Christ's body and blood with no more reverence and godly fear than they eat and drink at home.

But that which hath frightened people most from this Sacrament is the Apostle's saying, according to our translation, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." And I confess at first sight it looks very frightfully; for it seems to imply, that whosoever receiveth the Holy Sacrament after any unworthy manner, or any otherwise than he ought, is, *ipso facto*, damned, or adjudged to eternal punishments for it, which, if true, would discourage all considering persons from ever receiving at all, unless they have greater assurance of their own worthiness and abilities than can reasonably be expected in this life, or justly pretended to by any that know themselves. But our comfort is, this cannot possibly be the meaning of the words; for besides that no man can receive it so worthily as he ought, and every unworthy receiving, as I have shewn, is not that which the Apostle here speaks of—besides that, I say, the word *κατάρα*, which is translated 'damnation' in the text, in the margin of our Bibles is rendered 'judgment;' which shews that our translators themselves were not satisfied that the word here signified 'damnation,' but that it might be taken in the other sense. But, howsoever, they put 'damnation' into the text, to make people, I suppose, the more careful how they received, not foreseeing what ill uses might be made of it; and accordingly have been so in our age, wherein, through the ignorance or indiscretion of some persons, this one word hath kept more people from the Holy Communion than all the commandments for it can bring to it; not in itself, or from its own proper meaning, but by reason of the harsh sound it makes in our ears, who commonly use it for damnation to eternal punishments, whereas

it may be applied as well to those which are only temporal; and so it must be here. The original word *κρίμα* signifies 'judgment' in general, whereby a man is adjudged to any sort of punishment; but what that is, in particular, must be determined from the circumstances of the place where it is used; as in this place the Apostle Himself plainly shews what kind of judgment or damnation he means by it: for having said, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation," or judgment, "to himself," he immediately adds, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." 1Cor. 11. 30. From whence it is easy to suppose that some epidemical distemper at that time raged at Corinth, particularly among the Christians, of which many died, and others, though they escaped death, yet continued weak and sickly for some time after. This the Apostle ascribes to the judgment of God upon them, for their unworthy and profane eating and drinking Christ's mystical body and blood, as if it had been common food: "For this cause," saith he, "many are weak and sickly among you," &c., and therefore this must needs be the judgment which he here means. But this is so far from eternal damnation, that it is usually inflicted on purpose to prevent that; and that it was so at this time, appears from what follows: "For," ver. 31, 32. saith he, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." This was the end of that, as it is of all the judgments which God lays upon His people, even to bring them thereby to such a sight and sense of their sins, and to such an hearty and sincere repentance, that they may not be condemned for them; and therefore, when the Apostle saith, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;" and again afterwards, "If any man hunger," ver. 34. let him eat at home, that ye come not together unto condemnation," (where the same word is used again in the original,) neither the etymology nor common use of the word in other places, much less will the context here suffer it to be understood of eternal damnation, but rather of such temporal judgments, which are designed by Almighty God

to keep us from being condemned with the wicked and impenitent world.

Luke 8. 18.

Thus we see, in short, the whole scope and design of the Apostle in this remarkable passage concerning the Holy Sacrament; from whence we may easily observe, that all that can be reasonably inferred from what he here saith, is, that as it is a sin not to pray, or fast, or give alms, or hear God's Word aright, so it is a sin too not to receive the Lord's Supper aright, or as we ought to do it. But as we must "take heed how we hear," so we must take heed how we receive, that we may do it with that faith and reverence which becomes so Divine an institution, and so Heavenly a duty as that is, lest otherwise we offend God, and provoke Him to lay some heavy judgment upon us, and, except we repent, condemn us at last to everlasting fire, as He justly may, for any sin that we stand guilty of, before Him. But it is a great affront and abuse put upon God's Holy Word, to make this an excuse for our not frequenting the Holy Communion, when the Apostle designed it only for an argument, why we should receive it always in a worthy and decent manner; and therefore this is the great and only use we should make of it, that seeing, "He that eateth this bread and drinketh this cup of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body;" therefore as oft as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we must take care to do it worthily, discerning the Lord's body, and deporting ourselves accordingly in receiving of it: whensoever we are invited to this spiritual wedding, we must be sure to come, but we must be sure to come with our "wedding-garment" on, with such a temper and disposition of mind, as becomes the place, the company, and the feast we go to; for which purpose, we must prepare ourselves beforehand, and put our hearts into such a frame, that we may so feed upon the blessed body and blood of Christ our Saviour, that He may preserve both our souls and bodies to eternal life. But then you will say, perhaps, 'This requires a great deal of time, more than we can often spare from our necessary employments; and that is the reason that we do not receive so often as we otherwise would;' and

[Matt. 22.
11.]

I believe so too: that is the reason, the great reason of all, that this Holy Sacrament is so shamefully neglected by most people! They know it is a very good thing, and they would oftener partake of it, but that they have other business of greater consequence, as they wisely think, to mind, so that they cannot find time enough to prepare themselves as they ought for it. As in the parable; when a certain man had made a great supper, and sent his servants to call those which he had invited to it, they all presently began to make excuse: "The first said to him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." So it is to this day. Christ, the Eternal Son of God, at the expense of His Own blood, hath provided a supper, His Own Last Supper, the best feast that can be had on this side Heaven, and all things being ready, He sends His Ministers to invite all that are admitted into His Church to come and partake of it; but they all, or at least the far greatest part, desire to be excused; and if we would know the reason, it is because they have other business to do: one hath his farm to look after, another his shop, a third his warehouse and merchandise; and so every one finds something or other to do; any thing rather than come to the Lord's Supper. But these are but vain excuses, like those in the parable designed on purpose to shew the folly of those which made them: "The first had bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it;" wherein he betrayed his folly, in buying that which he had not seen. And so did the second, in buying "five yoke of oxen" before he had proved them, to know whether they were fit for his turn. But the greatest fool of all was the last, who said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come;" as if his marrying a wife could hinder him from coming to a feast. Such are the excuses that men commonly make for their not coming when they are invited to our Lord's Table: they serve only to discover the weakness and folly of those which make them. For how can a man betray the weakness of his judgment more than by preferring the most inconsiderable before the most valuable things that are?

Luke 14. 18-20.

Yet this is the case of all who at any time neglect the Holy Communion for any worldly business. They prefer their bodies before their souls, the world before their Saviour; earth, with all its vanities and troubles, before Heaven, and all the glory that He is there preparing for all those who keep His Commandments: for otherwise they would never suffer any thing in this world to hinder them from doing what He hath commanded for their more effectually obtaining eternal Salvation by Him.

But this being the most common objection against frequent Communion, let us look a little more narrowly into it, that we may see what cause men have to make it. First, some have none at all: yea, there are many such; many who are not incumbered with the affairs of this life, having a sufficient maintenance transmitted to them from their ancestors, or else acquired already by God's blessings upon their own endeavours, whereby they are able to support themselves and their families, without taking any further care about it. I do not question but there are many such here present at this time. Now what can you plead for your not frequenting the Holy Sacrament? You cannot say you have not time to prepare yourselves; for you have more upon your hands than ye well know what to do with; and therefore are often forced to invent ways how to spend it, which usually are as bad as to sit still and do nothing. And is it not a sad thing, that you should choose to do nothing, or worse than nothing, rather than that which God Himself hath set you, and hath given you so much time, on purpose that nothing might divert you from it? Remember, the time will come when time will be no more! And then you will wish with all your hearts, that you had employed it better while you had it. And I am sure there is no way possible for you to make better advantage of it, than by spending it in preparing yourselves for the Holy Communion, and then receiving it accordingly: this being the best course you can ever take, for your employing not only that, but all the rest of your time well. Whereas, if you still continue to neglect so great a duty, notwithstanding that you have little or nothing else to do in the meanwhile; for my part, I know not how you can answer it, either to God or your own consciences, nor what account you can give, either of your-

selves or of your time, at the Last Day ! But this I know, that you have but too much cause to suspect and fear that all is not right within you ; that whatsoever your temporal estate may seem, your spiritual is very bad ; and that all the ease and plenty which you now enjoy, will hereafter serve to no other purpose, than to increase your pain and misery.

But there are others who really have a great deal of worldly business upon their hands, more perhaps than they can well turn them to. But I would desire such to consider, that whatsoever worldly business they have, it is still but the business of this world, this transient and uncertain world, that soon passeth away : that they have another world to live in as well as this, a world that will have no end. And if they take so much care and pains about their living a few years, or perhaps a few days, upon earth, they ought surely to be much more careful how to live eternally, as they must, either in Heaven or Hell, either in the greatest pleasure they can enjoy, or else in the greatest pain they can endure. The difference betwixt which two is so vastly great, that whosoever duly weighs and considers it, must needs be inclined to make it his chief study and business in this world, to prepare for the next, — to “ seek the Kingdom of God and Matt. 6. 33. His righteousness, in the first place,” as our Saviour Himself commands. And he who doeth that, will be sure to order all his temporal affairs so that they shall never interfere with his spiritual, but give place to them upon all occasions. Although he be diligent and industrious in his calling, yet if things so fall out, that he must either neglect that for a while, or else his daily prayers, he doth not stand pausing which he had best do ; as seeing there is no comparison at all between them, the one having respect only to his present, the other to his future and eternal state. And so for the Holy Sacrament : if he have an opportunity put into his hands of receiving that, he dares not let it slip upon any worldly account whatsoever ; as knowing that he may get more there than all this world is worth, and lose more by the neglect of that, than of any other opportunity that can be offered him.

This is the sense and practice of every wise and good man in this case. But as for such, whose heads and hearts, as

well as hands, are so taken up with worldly business, that they cannot, or rather will not, spare so much time from that as to prepare themselves for the Holy Communion, they plainly shew that they prefer the things of this life before their duty to God, their bodies before their souls, and their temporal before their eternal happiness and welfare. These are the men of this world, who have, or at least desire to have, their portion in this life rather than the next. And these are they which St. Paul speaks of, where he saith, “Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.” I wish there were none such among us at this time. If there be, it will be in vain to say much to them, their hearts being so full of this world, that there is no room left for sober and good advice. And therefore I shall only desire, that when they are at leisure, they would remember our Saviour’s words, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Phil. 3. 18,
19.

Matt. 16. 26.

But some of those who thus live in a crowd of cares for this present life, may, notwithstanding, sometimes think of their future state, and then they resolve to set upon the use of those means which God hath appointed for their Salvation, and particularly the greatest of all, the Holy Sacrament, at least when their hurry of business is over, which they hope may be in a week or fortnight’s time; but in the meanwhile they desire to be excused.

Let us suppose that you are so resolved at present. But are you sure that those resolutions will hold, and that you will be in the same mind a fortnight hence that ye are in now? How do ye know but other business may come in before that, which may distract your thoughts as much or more than that ye have now upon you? But above all, what assurance have ye that ye shall live so long? And what if ye should die, as ye may, before that time? What do ye think will then become of you? If ye cannot fit yourselves for the Holy Sacrament, will ye be fit to die? No, surely! If ye be not prepared to appear before Christ at His Holy

Table, you will be much less prepared to appear before Him at His Judgment-seat, where you will receive your final and irrevocable sentence from Him. And, therefore, you had need to look about you, and to be always ready, as Christ Himself requires you to be with His Own mouth, saying, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be Luke 21.34. overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Whence you may observe, that He Who will be your Judge hath forewarned you, that the cares of this life will make you as unfit to appear before Him, as surfeiting and drunkenness itself. And therefore, if you have any care of your souls, take heed of the cares of this life, that they hinder you no longer from receiving His most blessed body and blood as often as ye can; for if they do, they will much more hinder you from giving a good account of yourselves before His tribunal. But as ye desire to be always ready for death and judgment, be always ready for that Holy Sacrament, which is the best preparatory in the world for it. And for that purpose, whensoever ye are invited to our Lord's Table, think thus with yourselves: 'I have now an opportunity put into my hands of partaking of the body and blood of my ever-blessed Saviour, to preserve my body and soul to everlasting life. It is true, I have at this time more than ordinary business upon my hand; but what is all this world in comparison of everlasting life and happiness? And who knows whether I shall ever have such another opportunity as this as long as I live?' Do but, I say, think thus, and then let slip any such opportunity if you can: for my part, if ye have any regard for your immortal souls, I believe it will be very difficult, if not impossible.

But that which deserves most to be considered in this case, is the preparation that is necessarily required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper; concerning which many whole books have been written, and some so large, that the very reading of them requires more time than a good Christian need spend in the duty itself. And this I believe hath discouraged many from receiving the Holy Sacrament so often as they ought, and as they otherwise would. For, meeting with such books as make the prepara-

tion to it so tedious and troublesome, that they cannot read and observe all that is there said about it, without laying aside all other business for a long time together, they are quite disheartened from ever attempting it, but when they can find a time wherein they have nothing else to do ; which, to those who follow any calling as they ought, happens but very rarely : who, therefore, very rarely so much as think of it, especially if they chance to meet with such books, as they sometimes may do, which make their preparation so nice and ticklish a thing, that they despair of ever observing all the little rules which are there laid down, and therefore seldom or never trouble their heads about it ; which shews what great care and caution should be used in treating upon this subject, lest we raise such scruples and difficulties in it, which may deter men from the Holy Sacrament, instead of preparing them for it. For my own part, I do not see but that whatsoever is generally necessary in order to it, may be brought within a small compass : for it may be all reduced to these few heads :

First, to the receiving the Lord's Supper aright, it is necessary that we be rightly instructed in the nature and end of it, that we may be able to "discern," as the Apostle speaks, "the Lord's body," or understand the difference between that and our ordinary food, and so know what we do ; without which it is impossible for us to do it as we ought. But for this purpose we need not run over great volumes, for we have every thing necessary to be known concerning it briefly but fully set down in our Church Catechism ; so briefly, that a child may learn it all ; and yet so fully, that the greatest scholar upon earth need know no more, in order to his worthy receiving this Holy Sacrament : for there we have the end why it was ordained, even 'for the continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby : ' there we have both the parts of it described and explained to us, that 'bread and wine which the Lord commanded to be received, is the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper ; ' and that the 'inward part or thing signified, is the body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper : '

there we have also the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby, even ‘the strengthening and refreshing our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by bread and wine.’ In which few words, we have all things necessary to be known concerning this Holy Sacrament, in order to the worthy receiving of it; and they are all so plain and easy, that we cannot suppose that any one who is bred up in the Christian religion, and is come to the years of discretion, can be ignorant of them. And if any be, it is but turning to the Catechism in their Common Prayer Book, and there they may find them; as they may all things else that are requisite for them either to know or believe, or do, or desire, that they may be saved.

In the next place, as in all our addresses to Almighty God, so especially in this, we ought certainly to endeavour all we can to prepare ourselves beforehand for it. For which purpose, the Apostle lays down this general rule: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” But he doth not tell us particularly what we should examine ourselves about, because that may be easily gathered from what he there saith concerning the Sacrament itself, and the manner of receiving it. But lest we should be mistaken in it, our Church hath taken care to give us particular directions about it, in the last words of her Catechism, where she tells us that it is required of them who come to the Lord’s Supper, ‘to examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of His death, and be in charity with all men.’ Which words are so plain, that they cannot be made plainer: and yet so full, that they contain all that can be truly and pertinently said upon this subject. If ye read all the books that have been written, and all the directions that are there given, about your preparation to the Lord’s Supper, you will find a great many more words; but all that are to the purpose amount to no more than what is here said. I do not deny but that the reading of such, or any other books of devotions, that are written with that care and prudence which the subject requires, may be a good help to bring your minds

into a fit temper and disposition for the blessed Sacrament. But still this is the sum and substance of all that you need to do in order to it, even to set apart some time beforehand wherein to 'examine yourselves, whether you truly repent of your former sins, so as steadfastly to purpose for the future to lead a new life:' whether you have a 'lively faith in God's mercies through Christ,' joined with a 'thankful remembrance of His death:' and whether ye 'be in charity with all men.' And if upon due examination, ye find that ye have such 'repentance,' such 'faith,' and such 'charity' as this is, which, be sure, all true Christians have, you need not doubt but that you are fit to receive the Holy Sacrament, and ought accordingly to do it. But that ye may be more fully assured of it, especially at the time of receiving, the Church itself is pleased to tell you it in the exhortation at the same time, saying, 'Judge, therefore, yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; repent you truly for your sins past, have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men. So shall ye be meet partakers of these holy mysteries.' And, therefore, she afterwards invites all that are so prepared, to 'draw near with faith,' and to 'receive the Holy Sacrament to their comfort.'

This, therefore, is all that is necessarily required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper. But all this may be easily done by any true Christian. It requires no great parts, or learning, nor time neither, for a man to look into his own heart, to review his life, to consider wherein he hath hitherto done amiss, and to resolve, by God's blessing, to do so no more, but to endeavour all he can to lead, for the future, a new and holy life, as becomes the Gospel of Christ. This is no more than what many do every day, or at least very often, whether they are to receive the Holy Sacrament or not; and so are always ready, whensoever they can get an opportunity to receive it, especially if they have been long accustomed to it. For by this means their repentance, faith, charity, and all other graces, being kept in continual exercise, and receiving strength and nourishment from the body and blood of Christ frequently communicated unto them, they by degrees grow up into habit and custom, so as

to be ready upon all occasions to exert and put forth themselves with ease and pleasure. And therefore such happy persons need not spend much time in their actual preparation for the Holy Communion, as having such an habitual disposition, whereby they are always duly qualified and prepared for it. Insomuch, that if they happen to come into a place where it is administered, although they did not know or think of it before they came, yet they can receive the benefit and comfort of it, and bless God for giving them such an opportunity, which they did not look for, but being put into their hands, they cannot but take hold of it, and improve it to their best advantage.

These, I confess, may seem to be of the higher rank of Christians, to which few ascend the ordinary way, without more than ordinary care and diligence in the use of those means which, by the grace of God accompanying of them, lead up to it. But we must not think, as some have done, that none but such as these should receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; for that was intended for all that believe in Christ, and are baptized in His Name: yea, they are all commanded to do this in remembrance of Him, one as well as another; the weak as well as the strong in faith: the weak, that they may be strong; and the strong, that they may not be weak again, but rather grow stronger and stronger, till they "come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Eph. 4. 13. I know there are many ignorant, though perhaps well-meaning, persons among us, yea, and some who pretend to great knowledge in the mysteries of our religion, who yet think that none but great men and eminent saints should come to the Holy Sacrament, they who have attained already to such an excellent and Divine temper of mind, as to live always above this world, and out of the reach of the Devil and his temptations: but, as for others, who are conscious to themselves of their daily infirmities, and are often in danger of being overpowered by one temptation or other, they must by no means venture upon it. But this certainly is a very great and dangerous mistake, and one of the Devil's tricks, to keep men off from using the best weapons, whereby to resist and conquer him. For all Christ's disciples are equally

bound by His command to do this in remembrance of Him. And all have equally need of it. If any want it more than others, it must be such whose faith is so weak, as not to be able as yet to overcome the world, the flesh, and the Devil, but are still wrestling and fighting with these their spiritual enemies, and therefore have need of all the aids and assistances which the "Captain of our Salvation" hath provided in that case; of which the receiving His most blessed body and blood was always found to be the most powerful and prevalent.

[Heb. 2.
10.]

But that it may be so to them, it is necessary that such persons take pains in preparing themselves for it. They must look back upon their lives, and bring to their remembrance as many as they can of their former sins, especially such as they have been most guilty of, and whereby they have most offended and dishonoured Almighty God; and must not only abhor and humble themselves for them, but also resolve never to commit them any more. They must search narrowly into their own hearts, to find out the weakest side, and resolve to set a stronger watch and guard than they used to do about it. They must bethink themselves what sort of temptations they have been most subject to, and oftenest overcome by, and must resolve never to give way to them any more, but to withstand them with all their might. They must consider what place, what company, what employment, what recreations or other circumstances of their life, have exposed them most to such temptations, and have been their chief occasions of their falling into sin, and must resolve for the future to forsake and avoid them. They must consult their own breasts, to know how they have performed their duties to God, and used the means that He hath appointed for their obtaining grace at His hands; how they have fasted and watched; how they have prayed both in public and private; how they have read and heard God's Holy Word; and how they have received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: whether they have lived in the neglect of some or other of these necessary duties, or else performed them in a careless and superficial manner; and must resolve to be more constant, and more hearty and sincere in all and every one of them, than hitherto they have been.

They must examine themselves, whether they be in charity, and in the faith, whether they really believe all the articles of the Christian religion, and have a sure trust and confidence in Christ their Saviour, and in all the promises which God hath made to mankind in Him, and must resolve to continue firm and steadfast in the same unto the end ; and they must make all these holy resolutions, not in their own, but in the Name of Jesus Christ, believing and depending upon Him for grace and power to perform them, so as to live accordingly for the future all the rest of their days. In short, they must call to mind the solemn vow and promise which they made to God, when they were admitted into His Church by the Sacrament of Baptism, and must now renew and ratify the same at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, faithfully promising again to Him, and purposing with themselves, by His assistance, to believe and do as they then promised, and to continue in the same unto their lives' end.

They who have thus prepared themselves for the Lord's Supper, whensoever it is administered, may, and ought most thankfully to receive it, not doubting but they shall find favour and acceptance with God, and great benefit and advantage to themselves by it, through His merits and intercession, whose body and blood they there receive. And yet all this may be easily and soon done by any of Christ's disciples ; by those of the lowest, as well as of the highest, forms in His school ; yea, it ought to be often done by all at other times, as well as when they are to receive the Holy Communion. It is true, it is in a particular manner requisite and necessary that a man examine himself before he eat of that bread, and drink of that cup, because, unless a man first knows the true state of his soul, he will not know how to make the right use of what he there receives, to his spiritual advantage. The Sacrament of Christ's body and blood is an universal remedy for all the distempers of our souls ; but except a man knows where his distemper lies, and what part is most affected, he cannot apply the medicine to it, and so can receive no benefit from it. But howsoever we must not think that self-examination is a duty to be performed only upon that occasion ; for he who never examines himself but only when he is to receive the Holy Sacrament,

had need to receive it very often, or else he will be a great stranger to himself, not knowing what condition he is in, nor what progress he makes in the way to Heaven, but rather will have just cause to suspect that he goes backward, and grows worse and worse every day: and therefore he who is really solicitous about his future state, as all true Christians be sure are, cannot but often reflect upon himself, and upon his present condition, although he have not an opportunity of partaking of Christ's body and blood as yet to make it better; and if he lives in a place, as many do, where such opportunities are seldom to be had, he must, notwithstanding, often call himself to account, look into the state of his soul, and settle all his spiritual affairs as solemnly as if he was to receive the Holy Sacrament immediately upon it. By this means he will be always prepared for it, and always longing and thirsting after it, and ready to catch at the next opportunity he can get of receiving it; and in the meanwhile he may make a shift to keep up his mind in a pretty good temper, through the grace and mercy of God, who, knowing that it is not his own fault that he doth not actually receive the Holy Sacrament, will be graciously pleased, as we have good ground to believe, to make up the want of it some other way.

But, blessed be God for it, this is not our case, who may receive the Holy Communion every Lord's Day in the year, and oftener too if we have a mind to it. How happy would some good people think themselves if they could have such opportunities as these are! and how miserable shall we be if we neglect and slight them! For my part, I do not see how we shall be able to answer it either to God or to ourselves another day; neither do I know what excuse or pretence any can have for it, besides those which we have now refuted; except it be this one, which some have made to themselves, even, that they have been several times at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but have not found that benefit and comfort from it which they expected, and therefore think it to no purpose for them to receive it oftener than they are obliged to do it, in order to their continuing in the Communion of the Church.

This, I know, hath been a great stumbling-block to many

well-meaning people, and therefore I shall endeavour to remove it out of the way as clearly as I can; for which purpose we may first observe, that what God commands us to do, we are therefore to do it because He commands it, whether we can get any thing by it or not; otherwise we do it not for His sake, but our own; not in obedience to His command, but in hopes of profit and advantage to ourselves, whereby it ceaseth to be a good work, or any way acceptable to God; in that we do not respect Him, but ourselves, and so prefer ourselves before Him in it, as in our present case. We are commanded by God, our Saviour, to do this in remembrance of Him: now, if we do it only in expectation of gaining something to ourselves by it, we do not regard or obey Him at all in it; in that we neither do it therefore because He commanded it, nor as He commanded it to be done; for He commanded it to be done "in remembrance of Him," and so made that, not our profit, the chief end of His Institution: and therefore, although He hath commanded us nothing but what is really for our good, and that this is so in an high and special manner, yet we must not make that our end in doing it, but we must "eat this bread, and drink this cup, in remembrance of Him," whether we receive any benefit from it or not, yea, although we were sure to have none, and so do it in pure and sincere obedience to His commandment; which whosoever doeth, will be sure, one time or other, to find the benefit and comfort of it, though not, perhaps, at present.

For the blessed body and blood of Christ, received, as it ought to be, with a quick and lively faith, will most certainly have its desired effect: but it operates, for the most part, upon our souls, as our ordinary food doth upon our bodies, insensibly and by degrees. We eat and drink every day, and by that means our bodies grow to their full stature, and are then kept up in life, health, and vigour, though we ourselves know not how this is done or perhaps take any notice of it. So it is with this spiritual meat and drink, which God hath prepared for our souls. By eating and drinking frequently of it, we grow by degrees in grace, and in "the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and still continue steadfast and active in the true

faith and fear of God, though, after all, we may be no way sensible how this wonderful effect is wrought in us, but only as we find it to be so by our own experience. And if we do that, we have no cause to complain that we get nothing by it; for we get more than all the world is worth; being strengthened in the inward man, and so made more fit for the service of God, more constant in it, and more able to perform it; or, at least, are kept from falling back, and preserved from many sins and temptations which otherwise we might be exposed to: and this, surely, is enough to make any one, that really minds the good of his soul, to hunger and thirst after this bread and water of life, and to eat and drink it as often as he can, although he do not presently feel the happy effect of it, as some have done, and as he himself sometimes may, when God seeth it necessary or convenient for him. In the meanwhile, he may rest satisfied in his mind, that he is in the way that Christ hath made to Heaven; and thank God for giving him so many opportunities of partaking of Christ's body and blood, and also grace to lay hold of them, to improve them to his own unspeakable comfort, such as usually attends the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper; whereby we are not only put in mind of the great sacrifice which the Son of God offered for our sins, but likewise have it actually communicated unto us, for our pardon and reconciliation to the Almighty Governor of the world; which is the greatest comfort we can have on this side Heaven; so great, that we shall never be able to express it unto others, how deeply soever we may be affected with it in ourselves. And though we be not always thus sensibly cheered and refreshed with it as we could wish to be, howsoever we can never receive the blessed Sacrament, but we have the pleasure and satisfaction of having done our duty to our Maker and Redeemer, which far exceeds all the comforts of this life, and therefore may well stay our stomachs till God sees good to give us more.

But let us now suppose that a man hath been often at our Lord's Table, and yet hath seldom or never received any real benefit or comfort from it, not so much as that which ariseth from our reflecting upon our having done what our

Saviour commanded us. This, I confess, may be the case of some persons: but then such should consider where the fault lies. It cannot lie in the institution itself: that can never fail of producing the same effect, where it is duly observed, at one time as well as at another, and in one person as much as in another; and therefore the fault must be in the persons themselves; they do not duly observe the institution, and then it is no wonder if they be never the better for it. Now there are two things required to the due observation of it; first, that men come rightly prepared to the Holy Sacrament; and then, that they receive it aright. They who fail either of these ways, must blame themselves if they miss of what they expected from it. What is necessary to the preparing ourselves for it, I have already spoken of, and have shewn that it is no more than what may be easily done, if men will but set themselves in good earnest about it. But if men will not do that, but come to the Lord's Table as they do to their own, without putting themselves, by God's assistance, into a right temper and disposition for it, they have no ground to expect any advantage by it; for they are not subjects capable of those spiritual profits and pleasures which are there exhibited. Their hearts are not set towards them, but rather quite bent another way, and therefore cannot possibly be touched or affected by them. What wonderful power hath the sun upon plants and seeds in the earth, to make them grow and bring forth fruit! And yet such plants or seeds which are rotten, corrupted, or not rightly set and disposed as they ought to be, are never the better for the influences of the sun, but remain just as they were, how long soever it shines upon them. So it is here: Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shines most powerfully in His Church especially at the commemoration of the great eclipse which He once suffered, as they find by experience, who come duly prepared to it, being so quickened, enlivened, actuated, and strengthened by it, that they bring forth "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, Gal. 5. 22, faith," and all the other fruits of God's Holy Spirit, as they^{23.} are reckoned up by His Apostles, whereas they who are disordered and out of tune, and will not take pains to put themselves into a suitable temper and disposition for it,

they are no way wrought upon, or influenced by it, but still continue barren and unfruitful. And so all must needs do who come not rightly qualified to the Holy Sacrament; they cannot truly eat of the blessed body and blood of Christ, and if they did, they could not digest it into proper food and nourishment for their souls, and so can receive no real profit or advantage by it; which, notwithstanding, should not discourage any from coming as oft as they can to the Lord's Table, but should rather excite them to prepare themselves always as well as they can for it; for then they will never complain of unprofitableness any more: but let them come as often as they please, they will every time go home better than they came, if they do but come thus rightly disposed to receive the body and blood of Christ, which is there communicated to them, and then likewise receive it also as they ought.

How they ought to receive it is the next question to be considered, and it had need be considered very seriously by all that expect any benefit from the Lord's Supper; for, although they come with never so good a disposition to it, yet unless they keep themselves in the same while they are at it, and actually partake of Christ's body and blood according to His holy institution, their expectations will be all frustrated: for the great benefit which we receive from this Holy Sacrament, is 'the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by bread and wine.' But as our bodies cannot be strengthened or refreshed by bread and wine unless we eat and drink it; so neither can our souls be so by the body and blood of Christ unless we actually partake of it: but our souls cannot actually partake of the body and blood of Christ any other way than by some act of their own; even by acting their faith in what is there signified and represented to them. What we there see with our bodily eyes, although consecrated to an holy use, it is still in its own nature plain bread and wine, which may strengthen and refresh our bodies, but can have no such influence or effect upon our souls, as being of a quite different nature from them. But by faith we look upon them as the signs and symbols of Christ's body and blood, and receive them

as such upon His Word ; which, as I have shewn, is a mighty strengthening and refreshing to our souls. But we can never thus receive Christ's body and blood, nor so much as discern it, any other way but by a quick and lively faith ; but that, as the Apostle saith, " is the substance of things Heb. 11. 1. hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." The body and blood of Christ is not seen in the Holy Sacrament, but faith doth plainly evidence, yea, itself is the evidence of it to us. So that by faith I am as fully persuaded of it, as if I saw it ; and although we do not see it there, yet we hope for it because of Christ's Word ; and what we thus hope for, our faith is the substance of it to us, causing it to subsist and operate in us as effectually, to all intents and purposes, as we can expect or desire, for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls ; whereas, without such a faith as this, we can receive nothing but bread and wine, and, by consequence, no spiritual benefit or comfort at all from the Holy Sacrament ; and that is the reason why, according to the appointment of our Church, at the distribution of the Sacramental bread, we say to every communicant, ' Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith ;' whereby every one is put in mind, in the very act of receiving, that he must there feed upon Christ by faith, as the only means whereby he can partake of His body and blood, so as to receive strength and nourishment to his soul from that holy feast.

For, indeed, the whole stress of this great work lies upon our faith. Unless that be duly exerted and acted, though men come to the Lord's Table, and feed upon the outward elements which are there given them, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper ; for that is a spiritual banquet which cannot be so much as tasted of any otherwise than by faith ; and therefore they who do not receive it with faith, have no cause to complain that they are never the better for receiving the Lord's Supper ; for they do really receive it no more than as if they were not present where it is administered ; and so can expect no more benefit from it than from food or physic which they do not take. But this should not dishearten any from coming to the Lord's Supper as often as they can, but should make them more careful to receive it always, as they

ought, with faith; and then they can never fail of their expectations from it; but will always receive as much, and often more than they could expect.

By this we may see how we ought to receive the Lord's Supper. If we desire to partake of the benefits of it, we must receive it with faith; and hence it is that our Church hath, in her great wisdom, so contrived that incomparable office which she hath made for the administration of this Holy Sacrament, that, from the beginning to the end of it, there is matter and occasion given us, all along, for the exercise of our faith in Christ, and the promises which God hath made us in Him, that so we may be sure to partake of His most blessed body and blood, and of all the merits of His death, whensoever we meet together for the celebration of it; which that I may the better demonstrate, and likewise shew how we should act our faith all the while that we are at our Lord's Table, so as to receive spiritual strength and comfort from it, it will not be amiss if we go through the whole office, especially so much of it as is or ought to be always used when there is a Communion, and not at any other time. From the beginning of the service to the end of the prayer for Christ's Holy Church, is appointed to be read upon Sundays and holydays, although there be no Communion: but if there be a Communion in the Church upon any other day as well as those, it ought to be read. And therefore it will be expedient to premise something concerning that, at least so much that we may understand the design of it, and how it makes way for our better performing of this great duty.

This service, therefore, being appointed for the Communion of the body and blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as it is to be all and always read at His Table by one of His Ministers, so it begins with His prayer, the prayer which He Himself composed, and left to His Church as a standing general form, to be used by all persons, at all times, and upon all occasions; to which it is fitted in such a wonderful manner, as sufficiently shews both the Author and intent of it. To this is subjoined a short prayer for this particular occasion, that God would be pleased to 'cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy

Spirit, that we may perfectly love Him, and worthily magnify His Holy Name,' in keeping His Commandments, which immediately after are so solemnly repeated in His Name by one of His Ministers standing at His Table, that we may and ought to hearken to them with the same attention, reverence, and godly fear, as if God Himself pronounced them again to us, as He did to the Israelites from Mount Sinai, Exod. 20. 1-18. with thunderings and lightnings, and the noise of the Angelic trumpet sounding in our ears. While we are thus hearkening to these Divine Laws, distinctly published and proclaimed to every one of us in particular, we cannot but every one call to mind his own sins, whereby he hath offended against these Laws, and how unable he hath been to keep any one of them as he ought, without the grace of God; and therefore we have no sooner heard any of them repeated, but we immediately beg of God mercifully to pardon our former transgressions of it, and to give us grace to observe it for the future, saying, after the repetition of each Commandment, from the bottom of our hearts, as well as with our mouth, 'Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!' all which must needs be acknowledged to be of great use to our due commemoration of that death which the Son of God suffered for these our sins, and to our partaking of His body and blood for the pardon of them, and for grace to walk hereafter in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless. For though we did examine ourselves privately before, we do it again publicly in the special presence of God Himself, openly declaring and making known His Laws particularly unto us, whereby our sins and infirmities are brought afresh to our remembrance, and we come to the Holy Sacrament with an actual sense of them upon our minds, and so are better able to apply the great remedy which is there prepared for our ease and cure. Upon which account I cannot but admire the prudence as well as piety of our Church, in appointing the Commandments to be publicly read upon this occasion.

The Commandments of Almighty God having been thus solemnly read to us, in obedience to them we first pray, as we are bound to do, in every distinct service, for His vicegerent upon earth, and then for ourselves and brethren in

the Collect for the day; which, if it be an holyday, hath respect to the blessing we then commemorate, otherwise it is for some special grace or mercy that we have all need of.

After this follows the Epistle, that is, some part of those Epistles which St. Paul, or other Apostles, wrote by the inspiration of God, wherein we are usually reminded of some of those duties which we heard before enjoined us in the Commandments, or upon some particular occasions, some other portion of Scripture relating to that occasion. Then follows the Gospel, or some of the Divine sayings, or acts of our blessed Saviour, as they are recorded by one of the four Evangelists, which never alters. There is never any other portion of Scripture appointed for the Gospel as there is for the Epistle: but that is always taken out of the very Gospel itself; by which means we always hear something which Christ Himself spake with His Divine mouth for our instruction when He was upon earth; or else something which He did by His Divine power for the confirmation of our faith in Him. Hence it is, that at the reading of the Gospel, the people are all required to stand up, not only to shew their readiness to stand by and defend it to the last, but likewise to express their respect and reverence to Christ Himself, Whose Gospel it is, and Whose words and works they hear rehearsed; and therefore must needs stand up to hearken diligently to them, as they would have certainly done, if they had been near Him when He spake or did them. And hence also it is, that in the first Common Prayer-book which was put out by King Edward VI. so soon as the Minister had said, The Holy Gospel is written in such a chapter, the people were ordered to say, 'Glory be to Thee, O Lord!' to testify their acknowledgment that He, Whose Gospel they were now to hear, is their Lord and Master, the Great and Almighty God; that all glory and honour is due to Him for revealing this Gospel to them, and accordingly to adore and worship Him for it, as all should do when they pronounce these words.

So soon as the Gospel is read, the Nicene Creed begins, which itself also contains the sum and substance of the Gospel; and therefore is appointed to be said or sung by all the people, standing in the same posture as they did in

hearing of the Gospel. And that, I suppose, is the reason why, although after the reading of the Epistle the Minister is to say, ‘ Here endeth the Epistle;’ yet after the reading of the Gospel, he is not to say, ‘ Here endeth the Gospel’ (as many, who do not consider the Rubric, are wont to do), because the Gospel doth not properly end there, but continues to be declared and published in the following Creed ; in which are briefly comprehended all the great articles of that holy religion, which Christ hath revealed to us in His Gospel : and therefore it ought to be jointly repeated by all the people there present, that all may thereby publicly own and profess their belief of all and every one of those articles, and so of the whole Gospel of Christ, in order to their being admitted to the Holy Communion, which otherwise they ought not to be.

After this Creed, there follows one of the Homilies, or sermons set forth by authority, or else one composed by the Minister himself, for the fuller explication of some part of the said Creed, or else of the Commandments before repeated ; which therefore comes in very properly in this place : after the summary of that Christian doctrine, according to which all sermons ought to be framed. After sermon, the Priest returns to the Lord’s Table, and then begins the Offertory, reading some sentences of Holy Scripture, chosen out on purpose to excite and stir up the people to give, every one according to his ability, something to pious and charitable uses. And while these sentences are in reading, the deacons, churchwardens, or some fit persons appointed for that purpose, gather the alms and other devotions of the people, and bring them to the Priest, who humbly presents and placeth them upon the Lord’s Table, as devoted to Him, and then begins the prayer for the whole state of Christ’s Church Militant here on earth.

Thus much of the Communion-service, even from the beginning of it, to the end of the foresaid prayer for Christ’s Catholic Church, is to be said upon Sundays and other holy-days, although there be no Communion, for want of a sufficient number to communicate with the Priest. In the first Common Prayer-book of King Edward VI. it was ordered that the Priest, although there were none to communicate

with him, shall say all things at the altar appointed to be said at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, until after the Offertory, upon Wednesdays and Fridays, without any mention of Sundays and holydays. From whence it appears, that they took it for granted, that there would always be a sufficient number of communicants, upon every Sunday and holyday at the least, so that they could not so much as suppose there would be no Communion upon any of those days. But it seems they feared that upon other days there might be sometimes none to communicate with the Priest, and so no Communion; and therefore ordered, that if it should so happen for a whole week together, yet, nevertheless, upon the Wednesdays and Fridays in every week, so much shall be said of the Communion-service as is before limited. But afterwards, as piety grew colder and colder, the Sacrament began to be more and more neglected, and by degrees quite laid aside upon the week-days; and then the Church did not think it convenient to order any of the service appointed for it to be read upon any other days but only upon Sundays and holydays. But upon those days she still requires, that although there be no Communion, yet all shall be said that is appointed at the Communion until the end of the general prayer (for the good estate of the Catholic Church of Christ), together with one or more of the Collects at the end of the Communion-service, concluding with the Blessing.

And, verily, there is great reason it should be so; not only because it is fitting that our devotions should be longer upon those than they are upon other days; but likewise there are several things particular in that part of the service which require it.

Here are the Commandments of Almighty God, the supreme Lawgiver of the world, which it is requisite that people should hear, and be put in mind of, at least upon those days which are dedicated to His service. Here is the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel, proper to many Sundays, and to all the holydays in the year, without which they could not be distinguished from one another, nor from other days, nor, by consequence, celebrated, so as to answer the end of their institution, unless they were read upon their proper days.

Here is the Nicene Creed, wherein the Divinity of our blessed Saviour is asserted and declared, and therefore very proper to be said or sung upon those days which are kept in memory of Him, and of His Apostles, by whom that doctrine, together with our whole religion grounded upon it, was planted and propagated in the world. Here is the offertory and choice sentences of Scripture, read to stir up people to offer unto God something of what He hath given them, as their acknowledgment that He gives them all they have, and that they hold it all of Him; which, howsoever it be now generally neglected, except there be a Communion, yet people ought certainly to be put in mind of it, at least upon all holydays, and especially upon the Lord's Own Day, according to His Own order, written by His Apostle St. Paul, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Here, among others, is the prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant here on earth; and it is but reason that we, as fellow-members of the same body, should join together in it upon all the great festivals of the year, which are generally celebrated by the whole Church we pray for, and by that means testify our communion with it. And besides, this, as well as the other part of the Communion-service, is performed at the Communion-table, the place where the Primitive Church used to perform its public devotions; and ours, which in all things else is conformable to that, cannot but imitate it in this particular, at least so far as to have some part of its services performed at the same place upon Sundays and holydays, although there be no Communion.

But the main reason why so much of the Communion-service is ordered to be read upon Sundays and other holydays, notwithstanding that there is no Communion, seems to be, that the Church may shew her readiness to administer it upon these days, and so that it is not hers, nor the Minister's, but the people's fault, if there be no Communion. For the Minister, by her order, goes up to the Lord's Table, and there begins the service appointed for the Communion, and goes on as far as he can, till he come to the actual celebration of it; and if he stops there, it is only because there are none, or not a sufficient number of persons, to communicate with him: for if there were, he was bound and is ready to consecrate and administer it to them. And

therefore if there be no Communion upon any Sunday or holyday in the year, the people only are to be blamed, and must answer for it another day. The Church hath done her part in ordering it, and the Minister his in observing that order: and if the people would do theirs too, the Holy Communion would be constantly celebrated, in every parish church in England, every Sunday and holyday throughout the year. Neither can they plead ignorance in the case, or say they did not think it to be their duty to communicate so often. For every time they see the Minister go up to the Communion-table, and there read part of the service appointed for the Holy Communion, they are put in mind of their duty, and upbraided with their neglect of it. From all which we may observe, by the way, how much those Ministers are to be blamed, who ever omit this part of the service, or do not perform it at the place appointed for it. How they can answer it to God, to the Church, to their people, or to themselves, for my part I know not.

Having thus briefly run over so much of the Communion-service as is to be read when there is no Communion, as well as when there is, we are now come to that part of it which never is, nor can be used, but only when the Holy Communion is actually administered; and therefore is chiefly to be considered in our present design, of shewing how we may and ought to receive it, so as to find the benefit and comfort of it. For which purpose we may observe, that after the prayer for Christ's Holy Catholic Church before mentioned, the Minister, who is always a Priest, seeing a competent number of devout Christians ready and desirous to partake of the body and blood of our blessed Redeemer, first reads to them a grave, pious, and pathetical exhortation, to consider what they are about to do, of how great benefit it will be to them, if with 'a true, penitent heart, and lively faith, they receive that Holy Sacrament;' how dangerous to receive the same unworthily; how they should come to it; what cause they have to give their most hearty thanks to the most Holy Trinity, for the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, Who ordained these holy mysteries as pledges of His love, and for the continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort. All which is so clearly and affec-

tionately expressed, that it contributes very much to the making up the defects of their preparation for it, and to raise their minds into such a holy and devout temper, as to be capable both of performing this great duty aright, and of receiving the benefits and comforts of it.

The exhortation being ended, the Minister (in the name of Christ and His Church) inviteth all who are thus godly disposed to the Lord's Supper, saying to them, 'Draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your comfort.' He invites them first to 'draw near,' thereby putting them in mind, that they are now invited into Christ's more special presence, to sit down with Him at His Own Table, that so they may be as near Him as they can be in this world, and therefore, as an emblem thereof, should come from the more remote parts of the Church, as near to the said Table as they may. But then He adviseth them to draw near 'with faith,' as without which all their bodily approaches will avail them nothing, it being only by faith that they can really draw near to Christ, and take this Holy Sacrament to their comfort. And therefore they should take special notice of this expression, used on purpose in this place, to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance, to keep their faith in continual exercise all the while that they are at our Lord's Table, so as to look upon Him as there present with them, observing all the motions both of their souls and bodies, and ready to communicate His Own most blessed body and blood unto them, to preserve their souls and bodies to everlasting life. But, seeing they cannot act their faith as they ought in Christ, Who died for their sins, until they have confessed and repented of them, therefore he calls upon them to make their humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon their knees.

And now all that are to communicate, being prostrate upon their knees, as so many guilty malefactors before the Judge of the whole world, do in a most humble and solemn manner jointly 'acknowledge and bewail the manifold sins and wickedness, which they from time to time have committed in thought, word, and deed, against His Divine Majesty;' professing themselves 'most earnestly to repent of them,' humbly beseeching Him to pardon what is past,

and to grant them grace for the future to ‘serve and please Him in newness of life,’ for Christ Jesus’ sake. All which is done with such apposite and pathetical words, that I do not see how it is possible for us to express our hearty and sincere repentance better than we do at that time.

While the people continue in this humble posture, begging for mercy and grace at the hands of God, His Minister stands up, and in His Name assures them, that He of His infinite mercy ‘hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him;’ and therefore he applies the said promises to all and every one there present, praying, that Almighty God would accordingly ‘have mercy upon them, pardon and deliver them from all their sins, confirm and strengthen them in all goodness, and bring them to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

And here it is that our faith must begin to work, as it is [Heb.11.1.] the “substance of things hoped for,” or a solid and substantial confidence that God will give us all the good things which He hath promised, and we therefore hope for at His hands, so as firmly and steadfastly to believe, that upon our hearty and sincere repentance, we are now absolved from all our former sins, and that from this time forward God will assist us with His grace, to serve and please Him, according to the prayers we have now put up to Him, and the promises which He hath made to us in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For all the benefit of absolution, as pronounced by the Minister, depends wholly upon this, our believing in the promises and word of God upon which it is grounded.

Which, therefore, that we may do, the Minister presently reads some select sentences of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God hath promised or declared His willingness to pardon and absolve us from our sins in the blood of His Son, that so we may act our faith accordingly upon them. And therefore He calls upon the people to hear, and take special notice of them.

As, first, those comfortable words which our Saviour saith [Matt.11.28.] to all that truly turn to Him, “Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” Which words contain so firm and solid a foundation whereupon to

build our most holy faith, that if we be but truly penitent, we cannot doubt of God's mercy to us. For here His Only Son, with His Own Divine mouth, invites all that are so to come to Him, promising, or engaging His Word, that He will refresh them; He will give them peace in their minds, quiet in their consciences, rest to their souls: He will take care that they shall neither travail nor be heavy-laden any longer with the burden of their sins. For He will refresh them with the sense of God's mercy, in the pardon of all their faults, and with the assistance of His grace, in the mortifying of all their lusts. "Sin shall no longer have dominion over them, because they are not now under the Law, but under His grace." Rom. 6. 14.

Now these being the words of Christ, of truth itself, we may and ought to have a sure trust and confidence on them; so as to be fully persuaded in our minds, that we being in the number of those whom He calls, and having obeyed His call in coming to Him, He, according to His Word, will ease us of our sins, and give us rest: especially considering, that He Himself assures us, also, with His Own mouth, that "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3. 16. Which words, containing the substance of the design of the whole Gospel, pronounced by Christ Himself, are therefore read in the next place, that we might have occasion to exercise our faith in all of it, and so have no place left for diffidence or doubting. For seeing the great reason that moved God to send His Son, was His infinite love of mankind, and the only end why He did it, was, "that all who believe in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life;" what can we desire more to excite and confirm our faith in Him? For, "He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not but with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8. 32.

But, lest the sense of our former sins should be apt to make us despond or despair of mercy, that nothing may be wanting to complete and strengthen our faith at this time, there are two other Divine sentences read, the one of St. Paul, saying, "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world

1 John 2. 1. to save sinners;" and the other of St. John, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the Propitiation for our sins." Whereby we are given to understand and believe that Christ came into the world on purpose to save such sinners as we are; that He was made a propitiation for our sins, by undergoing all the punishments that were due unto us for them; and that He is now our Advocate in Heaven, always interceding for us, and ready to apply the merits of His death unto us. At the hearing of which, our faith hath so much ground and matter to work upon, that we may well say with St. Paul, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us."

Rom. 8. 33,
&c.

Having thus exercised our faith, and so got above this world, we are now ready to go into the other, and to join with the glorified Saints and Angels in praising and adoring that God, Who hath done so great things for us: which that we may the better do, the Minister calls upon us to 'lift up our hearts,' to lift them up as high as we can, by a quick and lively faith in the Most High God, the Supreme Governor of the whole world: which being now ready to do, we immediately answer, 'We lift them up unto the Lord.' And our hearts being now all lift up together, and so in a right posture to celebrate the high praises of God, the Minister invites all to join with him in doing it, so as at the same time to believe that He is our Lord and our God, saying, 'Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.' Which the people having consented to, and approved of, by saying, 'It is meet and right so to do,' he turns himself to the Lord's Table, and acknowledgeth to His Divine Majesty there specially present, that, 'It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks to Him.' And then the Minister looking upon himself and the rest of the communicants, as members of the Church Triumphant, and all apprehending themselves by faith, as in the midst of that blessed society, we join with them in singing forth the praises of the Most High God, Father, Son,

and Holy Ghost, saying, 'Therefore, with Angels, and Archangels, and with all the company of Heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name, ever more praying Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.' And certainly if ever our souls be in Heaven while our bodies are upon earth, it must be in the singing of this heavenly anthem, when our spirits, 'with those of just men made perfect,' yea, with the whole company of Heaven, in so solemn and seraphic a manner, adore and magnify the eternal God, our Maker and Redeemer: especially, when we celebrate the nativity, the resurrection, and ascension of our blessed Lord, His mission of the Holy Ghost, or the most glorious Trinity, for which there are proper prefaces appointed to raise up our hearts as high as possible, in praising God for such transcendent mysteries and mercies as those are.

Now, if ever, our minds must needs be duly prepared to receive the blessed body and blood of our dear Lord. And therefore, the Minister having first acknowledged our unworthiness of so great a mercy, and prayed to God to assist with His Own grace to receive it worthily, he then saith the prayer of consecration.

And now there is nothing either seen, or said, or done, but what puts us in mind of something or other whereupon to employ and exercise our faith in the highest manner that we can.

When we see the bread and wine set apart for consecration, it minds us of God's eternal purpose and determinate counsel, to offer up His Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world.

The Minister's reading the prayer of consecration, and performing that whole work alone, none of the people speaking a word, or any way assisting him in it, may put us in mind how the whole work of our Salvation was accomplished by Christ alone, no mere creature contributing any thing at all towards it; and therefore we should believe in Him as our only Mediator and Advocate.

When we hear those words, "Who in the same night that He was betrayed took bread," we are then by faith to be-

hold our Lord at His Last Supper, there instituting this Sacrament which we are now to receive, and distributing it to His Apostles with His Own most blessed hands.

When we see the bread broken, we should then call to mind that grief and pain, those bitter agonies and passions, which the eternal Son of God suffered for our sins and in
[Is. 53. 5.] our stead. How "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities:" how His blessed body was broken, His hands and His feet fastened to the cross, with nails drove through them, and all for our sins, even for ours.

And so when the Minister takes the cup into his hands, or pours out the wine, we are then by faith to behold how fast the blood trickled down from our dear Lord and Saviour's head when crowned with thorns, from His hands and feet when nailed to the cross, from His side when pierced with the spear, and from His whole body when He was in His agony, and all to wash away our sins: still believing that it was for our sins that all this precious blood was shed: for such and such sins, which we know every one ourselves to have been guilty of.

When we hear the words of consecration repeated, as they came from our Lord's Own mouth, "This is My body which is given for you, and this is My blood which is shed for you," and for many, "for the remission of sins," we are then steadfastly to believe, that although the substance of the bread and wine still remain, yet now it is not common bread and wine as to its use, but the body and blood of Christ, in that Sacramental sense wherein He spake the words; inso-much, that whosoever duly receives these His creatures of bread and wine, according to Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, are partakers of His most precious body and blood, as it is expressed in the prayer of consecration.

When we see the Minister distributing the Sacramental bread and wine to the several communicants, we are then by faith to look upon our Lord as offering His blessed body and blood, and all the benefits of His death, to all that will receive them at His hands: entertaining ourselves all the while others are receiving with these or suchlike meditations:

‘Behold the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sins of the world! Behold the Son of God, the Only-begotten of the Father, Who loved us, and gave Himself for us; Who Himself bare our sins in His Own body on the tree, and washed us from them in His Own blood! See how willing and ready He is to communicate the blessings He hath thereby purchased! how desirous that all would partake of them! Methinks I hear Him crying out, “Come unto Me, [Matt. 11. 28.] all ye that travail and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you.” Methinks I see Him yonder going about by His Minister, from one to another, and offering His most blessed body and blood, with all the merits of His most precious death, to all that will receive them faithfully. Happy, thrice happy, are they who do so! They are absolved from all their sins, and accounted righteous before God. They are delivered from the wrath to come, by the blood of the Lamb, as the Israelites were by that which was typically sprinkled upon their door-posts. They are reconciled to the great Creator and Governor of all things, and are made His children by adoption and grace. They are always safe and secure under His care and protection, and never want anything that is really good for them. They have His Son always interceding for them, and His Spirit always abiding with them, to direct and assist them in what they do. “They are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,” and therefore they will be glorified with Him for ever. O that I might be in the number of those blessed souls! When will it once be? When will my Lord and Saviour come to me, that I also may partake of His most blessed body and blood? My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready to receive it. My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.’ [Ps. 63. 1; Rev. 22. 20.]

Thus we may employ our thoughts, while others are receiving; but when it comes to our turns to receive it, then we are to lay aside all thoughts of bread, and wine, and Minister, and every thing else that is or can be seen, and fix our faith, as it is “the evidence of things not seen,” wholly and solely upon our blessed Saviour, as offering us His Own body and blood, to preserve our bodies and souls to everlasting life, which we are therefore to receive by faith, as

[Heb. 11.
1.]

it is "the substance of things hoped for," steadfastly believing it to be, as our Saviour said, "His body and blood," 'which,' as our Church teacheth us, 'are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper;' by which means, whatsoever it is to others, it will be to us, who receive it with such a faith, the body and blood of Christ our Saviour, the very 'substance of all things hoped for,' upon the account of His body that was broken, and His blood that was shed, for us.

And the better to excite and assist us in the exercise of our faith after this manner, at our receiving this Holy Sacrament, the Minister, at the distribution of it, first applies the merits of Christ's death to each particular person that receives it, saying to every one singly, and by himself, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee, and the blood which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life,' that so I may apply and appropriate it to myself as the body and blood of Him that loved me, and gave Himself for me, to preserve my body and my soul to everlasting life. And then he adds, at the distribution of the bread, 'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.' Whereby I am put in mind again to eat it in remembrance that Christ died for me in particular, and then am taught how to feed upon Him, even 'in my heart by faith with thanksgiving.' In my heart, because it is not bodily but spiritual food: by faith, as the only means whereby the heart or soul can take in its proper nourishment, and receive the substance of things hoped for, even the body and blood of Christ; and then it must be with thanksgiving too as the necessary consequent of faith. For as no man can be truly thankful to Christ, unless he actually believe in Him, so no man can actually believe in Him, but he must needs be truly thankful both to and for Him; and therefore, at the distribution of the cup, after the words, 'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee,' it is only added, 'and be thou thankful;' because this necessarily supposeth and implieth our feeding upon Him in our hearts by faith, as without which it is impossible for us to be truly thankful.

Hence also it is that our Church requires us to receive the

Holy Sacrament kneeling, not out of any respect to the creatures of bread and wine, but to put us in mind that Almighty God, our Creator and Redeemer, the only object of all religious worship, is there specially present, offering His Own body and blood to us, that so we may act our faith in Him, and express our sense of His goodness to us, and our unworthiness of it, in the most humble posture that we can; and, indeed, could the Church be sure that all her members would receive, as they ought, with faith, she need not command them to receive it kneeling, for they could not do it any other way: for how can I pray in faith to Almighty God to preserve both my body and soul to everlasting life, and not make my body as well as soul bow down before Him? How can I by faith behold my Saviour coming to me, and offering me His Own body and blood, and not fall down and worship Him? How can I by faith lay hold upon the pardon of my sins, as there sealed and delivered to me, and receive it any otherwise than upon my knees? I dare not, I cannot do it! and they who can, have too much cause to suspect that they do not discern the Lord's body, and therefore cannot receive it worthily. Be sure, our receiving the blessed body and blood of Christ, as the Catholic Church always did, in an humble and adoring posture, is both an argument and excitement of our faith in Him. By it we demonstrate, that we 'discern the Lord's body,' and believe Him to be present with us in a peculiar Sacramental sense; and by it we excite and stir up both ourselves and others to act our faith more steadfastly upon Him, in that by our adoring Him, we actually acknowledge Him to be God as well as man, and therefore on Whom we have all the reason in the world to believe and trust for our Salvation.

When we have thus spiritually eaten the flesh of Christ, and drunk His blood, then we are firmly to believe, and rest fully satisfied in our minds, that, according to His Own word, "Christ now dwelleth in us, and we in Him; that Christ is one with us, and we with Him;" and therefore that God hath now sealed to us the pardon of our sins in His blood, and will enable us for the future to walk in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days: which faith, together with our thankfulness for so great a mercy, we

ought to exercise all the while that the rest of the communicants are receiving, not suffering our thoughts to wander up and down, but keeping them as close as we can to the work, still ruminating upon that spiritual food which we have eaten, after this or the like manner:—

Ps. 103. 1, 2.

“Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise His Holy Name. Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” “Behold God is my Salvation, I will trust and not be afraid. For the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song: He also is become my Salvation.” He Himself, by the one oblation of Himself once offered, hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; and He hath now given me a share in it: for He hath communicated unto me that body and blood wherewith He did it, and hath assured me thereby of His favour and goodness towards me, in the pardon of all my sins, and that I am a member incorporate in His mystical body, and an heir, through hope, of that everlasting Kingdom which He hath purchased with His Own blood. What shall I render unto the Lord for these His most inestimable benefits? I will offer and present myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. I will believe in Him, I will trust in Him, I will love and honour Him with all my heart and soul; I will spend the rest of

[Phil. 1. 27;

Gal. 5. 24;

Jam. 4. 7;

ch. 1. 27; 1

Thess. 5. 22;

Eph. 2. 10;

2 Cor. 12.

9.]

my days wholly in His service, and to His glory. I will order all my conversation as becometh His Gospel; I will crucify the flesh; I will resist the Devil; I will keep myself unspotted from the world; I will abstain from all appearance of evil, and do all such good works as He hath prepared for me to walk in; for His grace shall be sufficient for me, His strength shall be made perfect in my weakness, His power shall rest upon me, His Holy Spirit shall abide continually with me, and in me, to direct, sanctify, and govern both my heart and body in the ways of His laws, and in the works of His Commandments, so that now, through His most mighty protection, I shall be preserved both in soul and body to everlasting life. Amen. Hallelujah. Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, be unto the Lord our God, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever!’

Now, when all have communicated with the same humble confidence, we jointly address ourselves to Almighty God, as our Heavenly Father, in that Divine form of prayer, which He, whose body and blood we have now received, was pleased to compose, and require us to use upon all occasions: after which, having added another prayer proper for this great and solemn occasion, we join together in singing or saying that incomparable hymn, ‘Glory be to God on high,’ &c. the first part whereof was sung by the choir of Heaven [Luke 2. 14.] at our Lord’s nativity, and the rest added by the Primitive, if not by the Apostolic Church; it being the most ancient hymn that we know of, and that which hath been generally used both by Greek and Latin churches all along from the beginning of Christianity: and this is the most proper place for it, now that our hearts are strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, and so ready to sing and give praise in the best manner that we can ever do it upon earth. But for that purpose it will be necessary to keep our minds all the while intent, and our faith still fixed upon God the Father Almighty, and upon His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to whom we here speak in a particular manner, and therefore should look upon Him as specially present with us, hearing what we say to Him, and observing how earnestly we beseech Him, the Lamb of God, the Son of the Father, “Who taketh away the sins of the world,” to have [John 1. 29.] mercy upon us, and how heartily we adore and magnify His Divine holiness, His absolute dominion over the whole world, and His, together with the Holy Spirit’s, infinite height in the glory of the Father.

After all which duly performed, having prayed for God’s acceptance of what we have done, and for His blessing upon us, we are accordingly dismissed, as well we may, with “the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and with the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,” which will most certainly be and remain [Phil. 4. 7.] with those who thus receive the Holy Communion always.

I have now gone over the whole Communion-service, taking notice by the way of such things only as are plain and obvious in the several parts of it. From whence it is easy to observe, that it is all contrived so as to set before

us continual matter for our faith to work upon, before as well as at the receiving the Holy Sacrament; that our faith having been kept so long in exercise upon our blessed Saviour beforehand, it may be more ready to be fixed upon Him in the actual receiving the Holy Communion, so as that we may partake of His most blessed body and blood, which otherwise we could not: for without faith, as it is impossible to please God, so it is impossible to partake of Christ; and therefore, not only infidels who have no faith at all, but they also who have faith, unless they use it at the Holy Sacrament, they can only receive the outward part or sign of the Lord's Supper; they cannot possibly partake of His body and blood signified by it: for that cannot be so much as discerned, much less received, any other way than by faith. And that is the reason why so many go from the Holy Sacrament no better than they came to it: because, while they are there, they either stare about them, or think of other things, at least they do not keep their minds and faith intent upon the work they are about. They feed only upon the bread and wine with their mouths, they do not feed upon Christ in their hearts by faith, and therefore cannot possibly receive any spiritual strength or refreshment from Him: whereas, if, whilst they are eating and drinking the outward elements, they would at the same time lift up their hearts, and fix their faith upon that which is signified and represented by them, their souls would be much more strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, than their bodies are by the bread and wine.

From hence it appears, both how little reason any can have to plead their unprofitableness under it as an argument for their not frequenting the Holy Sacrament, and likewise how we may receive it, so as to be always the better for it. But for that purpose it is requisite that we do it often: for the oftener we do it, the more expert we shall be at it, and the more benefit and comfort we shall receive from it. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for those who do it only now and then (as once or twice a-year), ever to do it as they ought: for every time they come to it, they must begin as it were again; all the impressions which were made upon their minds at the last Sacrament being worn out before the

next; and it being a thing they are not accustomed to, they are as much to seek how to do it now as if they had never done it before. It is by frequent acts that habits are produced: it is by often eating and drinking this spiritual food that we learn how to do it so as to digest and convert it into proper nourishment for our souls; and therefore I do not wonder that they who do it seldom, never do it as they ought, nor, by consequence, get any good by it: I should rather wonder if they did. But let any man do it often, and always according to the directions before laid down, and my life for his, he shall never lose his labour, but, whether he perceives it or not, he will grow in grace, and gather spiritual strength every time more and more.

If such considerations as these will not prevail upon men to lay aside their little excuses for the neglect of so great a duty, and to resolve for the future upon the more constant performance of it, for my part I know not what will; and therefore shall say no more, but that I never expect to see our Church settled, primitive Christianity revived, and true piety and virtue flourish again among us, till the Holy Communion be oftener celebrated than it hath been of late, in all places of the kingdom: and am sure, that if people were but sensible of the great advantage it would be to them, they would need no other arguments to persuade them to frequent it as often as they can; for we should soon find, as many have done already by experience, that this is the great means appointed by our ever-blessed Redeemer, whereby to communicate Himself and all the merits of His most precious death and passions to us, for the pardon of all our sins, and for the “purging of our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.” So that by applying ourselves thus constantly unto Him, we may receive constant supplies of grace and power from Him to live in His true faith and fear all our days; and by conversing so frequently with Him at His Holy Table upon earth, we shall be always fit and ready to go to Him, and to converse perpetually with Him in His kingdom above, where we shall have no more need of Sacraments, but shall see Him face to face, and adore and praise Him for ever, as for all His other blessings, so particularly for the many opportunities He hath given us of partaking of His most blessed body and blood.

[Heb. 9.
14.]

A DEFENCE
OF THE
BOOK OF PSALMS,

COLLECTED INTO ENGLISH METRE, BY THOMAS STERNHOLD,
JOHN HOPKINS, AND OTHERS.

WITH
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE LATE NEW VERSION,
COMPARED WITH THE OLD.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray: Is any merry, let him sing psalms.—
James, v. 13.

Let the Word of God dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing
one another, in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing with grace in
your hearts to the Lord.—*Col.* iii. 16.

A DEFENCE
OF THE
BOOK OF PSALMS.*

THE great endeavours that have been made, of late, to cast out the Old, and bring in a New Version of the Singing-Psalms into our Church, have made so great a noise among us, that many must needs be thereby stirred up to consider what great faults there are in the Old, for which it may justly be ejected, after so long possession; and wherein the New is so excellent, that both that, and all other, ought to give place to it. I, amongst others, was so startled at the hearing it, that I could not be at rest in my own mind till I had impartially weighed one Version against the other, and both against the text. When I had done that I found the one so very light and airy, the other so grave and solid, that I could not think that any who consider what they do, would ever change upon such unequal terms. But afterwards, I heard that some in and about the City of London had actually done it; which I could not but much wonder at; and more, that none of our learned divines have undertaken the defence of that which hath been used in their own, and all the parish churches in England, time out of mind. But they, perhaps, may look upon it as standing upon so firm a bottom, that all attempts against it will, in a short time, come to nothing; and I am much of the same mind: yet, nevertheless, hoping that it may do some service to the Church, or, at least, shew my good-will to it, I shall endeavour to recollect and put in order some of the observations that I have made upon each Version, especially the Old.

* First published in the year 1710.

First, therefore, it is a great prejudice to the New, that it is new, wholly new; for whatsoever is new in religion, at the best, is unnecessary. People having been religious before, they may still be so, if they will, without it: which, therefore, can be of no real advantage to them, but may do them much hurt. For, when a thing hath once been settled, either by law or custom, so as to be generally received and used by them for a long time together, it cannot be afterwards put down, and a new thing set up in its stead, without giving them great offence and disturbance, putting them out of their road, and perplexing their minds with fears and doubts which way to take, and inclining them also to have an ill opinion of the Church they live in: for, nothing is a greater blemish to a Church, nor gives more just cause to suspect that all is not right in her, than her not being steadfast and immovable, but shifting and changing at all turns. Which, therefore, every well-established Church must endeavour to avoid as much as it is possible; so as never to suffer any thing to break in upon its first establishment, upon any account, nor alter so much as any considerable circumstance in it, but where there is such an absolute necessity for it, that the reason why it is altered, may be as plain and evident to the people, as that it is so; that so they may not be tempted to think, that it is altered only for alteration's sake; or, that something new is brought in among them, for no other reason but because it is new.

I speak not this as my own, but as the sense also of Christ's Holy Catholic Church, and particularly that part of it of which I am an unworthy member. For I have observed, that she hath all along taken special care to avoid all suspicion of novelty: and for that end, established all things so well at first, that there might be no need of adding any thing new afterwards, nor of making any alterations, unless they were such as no way affected her first establishment, but that might always continue the same, as much as a man is the same, after he hath altered his clothes, as he was before. To see this, we need only cast our eye upon what hath been the practice of our Church, both at and ever since the Reformation, from whence we date our present establishment.

Our first Reformers did not undertake to make a new religion, but only to restore the old : they laid aside nothing but what was lately brought in, at least, in comparison of the old doctrine and discipline, which they retained, as having been taught and practised by the Apostolical and Primitive Church, both in the East and West, before it was corrupted. And accordingly, finding, by their great reading, that no National Church was ever established without a Liturgy, or Form of Common Prayer, to be used in the service and worship of Almighty God, they also composed one for the use of this Church. But, how did they compose it ? Not out of their own heads, but out of the Holy Scriptures, and such forms of prayers and praises as had been used long before, in the best and purest ages of the Church. As when they wanted a Collect, wherewith to conclude the morning and evening prayer every day, they would not make one of their own; but finding one proper for the occasion in the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom, who lived above a thousand years before, they took that out of the said Liturgy, where it is still extant (about the middle of it), and put it at the end of theirs. The same may be observed of the other Prayers, and Creeds, and Hymns, they being such as had been used in the service of God, by his saints and people, many ages before; and therefore might justly be presumed to be more acceptable to Him, than any new inventions. So great care did our Reformers take to keep to the good old way which the first Christians walked in, and to admit nothing that was new into her constitution, for that very reason because it was so. By which, among other means, this Church still holds communion with the whole Church of Christ militant here on earth; which is as great an happiness to us, as it is an honour to her.

The first draught of this Liturgy was made towards the beginning of King Edward VI.'s reign; but, before it could be well settled, the same was brought into another form, and established by Act of Parliament, in the fifth and sixth years of the said king: but that Act being repealed, in the reign of Queen Mary, the Liturgy was laid aside till Queen Elizabeth came to the crown. And then, again, it was found necessary to have some Liturgy or other. But did

[Vol. vi. p.
989. Ed.
Savil.]

they go about to make a new one? So far from that, that they only repealed the aforesaid Act of Repeal, and so re-established the former, as it was left by King Edward, without innovating any thing in the substance of it, nor making any other but one alteration or addition of certain Lessons, to be used on every Sunday in the year, and the form of the Litany altered and corrected, and two sentences only added in the delivery of the Sacrament to the Communicants; and none other, or otherwise, as appears from the Act for Uniformity, *Primo Eliz.* by which it was established. And so it continued all her reign. And when her successor, King James I., had heard all the objections that could be made against it, in the conference at Hampton Court, he, by his own authority, ratified the same, without any alterations, except in some few of the Rubrics; and they also were so inconsiderable, that scarce any in those days could take notice of them; and there are but few, I believe, in this age, that know what they were. And so, again, at the Restoration of King Charles II. the same Liturgy was restored; in all points the same, being no way altered, except in some words and phrases, and with the addition of a few prayers, which made no alteration in the body of the book, but that was and still is the same, that was established at the beginning of the Reformation. So far is our Church from chopping and changing any thing material in her first establishment, notwithstanding all the clamours that her enemies have raised against it.

To this we might add, that when, in the reign of the Queen, they were to settle the doctrine of the Church in XXXIX. Articles, they did not make a new body of Articles, but took those which had been agreed upon and set forth in the reign of King Edward VI. without any alteration at all in the doctrine, and very little in the words and expressions. But that which may seem to come nearest to our purpose, is, the translation of the Bible. For, in the beginning of her reign, the Queen having appointed and authorised several of the Bishops (not to make a new one, but) to review the old translation of the Bible, they, accordingly, set forth that which was afterwards used all her reign, throughout the kingdom, being commonly called, ‘The

Bishops' Bible.' But in the reign of King James I., at the conference at Hampton Court, it was resolved, that there should be a uniform translation, which should be done by the best learned in both Universities, then reviewed by the Bishops, and ratified by royal authority, to be read in the whole Church, and no other. Which great work was committed by his Majesty to the care of the most learned men that could be found in the kingdom. To whom the King himself gave several rules to be carefully observed in it: the first whereof was this, "The ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called 'The Bishops' Bible,' to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit." Which was done accordingly; insomuch, that although that which was then made be commonly called the New Translation, yet it is the same that the former was, with so few alterations, and those so imperceptible, at least to the vulgar, that the Old hath been read in several Churches instead of the New, ever since, to our days, the people perceiving no difference between the one and the other.

Seeing, therefore, our Church, in the many revolutions that she hath gone through, hath stuck thus close to her first constitution, so as to admit of nothing that was new into it, no new Liturgy, nor new Articles of Faith, nor so much as a new translation of the Bible, but hath still kept to the old, and hath made no alterations in that neither, except in such little circumstances as had no influence upon the substance; we may certainly conclude, that if it was left to her to consider what to do about the translation of the Singing-Psalms, she would do with that as she hath done with the other things; that is, she would retain the old just as it is, or, if she saw occasion, alter here and there a word; but would by no means admit of a new one, how much so ever it was recommended to her. And, therefore, all that have that honour for our Church, which is really due to her, can need no other argument than this, that is drawn from her pious and prudent example, to persuade them to reject all new translations of the Psalms, and still to keep up that which hath been used ever since the Reformation.

Which suggests another reason, why they ought to do

so: for, as it is a great prejudice to the New translation, that it is new; so it is a great advantage to the Old, that it is old,—as old as the Reformation itself; when the Church (I speak not of the State) was inflamed with more than ordinary zeal for the honour of God, and was, accordingly influenced and actuated with an extraordinary measure of His Holy Spirit, as it was necessary she should be, for the carrying on and finishing so great a work in that critical juncture: insomuch, that I have heard it observed by divines, as well as other considering persons, that what was done at that time, is scarce imitable in this. We may pretend to more art and learning than they had; but we cannot reach that strain of wisdom, piety, and devotion, that runs through all their writings, especially such as were designed for the public service of God and His Church. And therefore we had need take heed how we meddle with any thing that was done at that time; at least, not so as to lay it aside. If we do, we shall soon find the want of it; for, notwithstanding all our high conceits of ourselves, we shall find it difficult, if not impossible, to substitute any thing else in its place, which will answer the end for which it was designed, so well as that doth. Wherefore, the translation of David's Psalms into English metre, which was made at the beginning of the Reformation, in the reign of King Edward VI. and therefore savours of the spirit which was then in our Church, upon that account ought to be highly valued by all that have any respect for the Reformation; and is, indeed, in itself more valuable than most people are aware of.

But to set this in so clear a light that all may see it, it will be necessary to proceed gradually. For we must first observe, that our first Reformers, being very conversant in the Holy Scriptures, in Ecclesiastical History, in the writings of the Fathers, and in the Canons and Constitutions of the Church of God in all ages: they found, that psalmody, or the singing of Psalms and Hymns to the praise and honour of Almighty God, always made a considerable part of the public service that His people performed to Him in their religious assemblies: the chief end of all such assemblies being to worship His Divine Majesty, by expressing their

reverence and godly fear of His supreme authority over all the world ; by celebrating the glory that shines forth in His creation and government of it ; and by acknowledging and recounting His goodness, His mercy, and truth, and all the wonderful works that He hath done, and still doeth, for the children of men. Which could not be so well done, as by the whole congregation joining together in singing such Psalms and Hymns of praise and thanksgiving, as were composed by His Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, or else in His Church, for that end and purpose. Which, therefore, having been practised in all the Churches from the beginning of Christianity, as well as before, our Reformers took care to keep it up in this too. And for that purpose, they appointed the Psalms of David, dictated to Him by the Spirit of God, to be repeated all over every month in the year, by certain portions every day, and an Hymn after each lesson, both at morning and evening prayer, and always one, sometimes two Creeds. All which Psalms, and Hymns, and Creeds, they ordered to be ‘ said ’ or ‘ sung ’ in every congregation : — ‘ Said,’ where they could not be sung ; but ‘ sung,’ where-soever they could be so. And, that they might be always ‘ sung,’ at least, in all cathedral and collegiate churches, certain persons were appointed, in each of them, to learn the art of singing by musical notes ; that, by their assistance, the whole congregation might join together in praising God, by singing, or making melody, at least in their hearts, unto Him ; this being the best means that could be thought of, to raise up our hearts to a due pitch for so high a work ; as they know by experience, who have been long used to it, so as to be able to join heartily and sincerely in it. For which reason also, besides these stated Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual songs, after the third Collect both at morning and evening prayer, there is another Hymn or Anthem to be sung in such places. But what that shall be, is not appointed by the Church ; but it is left to the discretion of one who presides there, to choose such a one as he shall judge most proper to set forth the glory of God in general, or upon any particular occasion that shall offer itself. In which, great care ought to be taken that it be such as will answer its end, and that the whole congregation may understand

and join together in it. Otherwise, instead of furthering, it will interrupt their devotions: which whosoever shall be the cause of, either by his carelessness or indiscretion in the choice, ought to be called to account for it by his superiors here, and will certainly be so by the Supreme Judge of the world at the Last Day.

But there is so much art and skill required to this way of singing, that it cannot be practised in ordinary parish churches; which our first reformers being sensible of, they did not appoint the psalms and hymns aforesaid to be only 'sung,' but either 'said' or 'sung;' that where they cannot be 'sung,' they may, at least, be 'said:—not 'read,' as the Lessons are appointed to be, by the Minister only, but 'said,' that is, as the word implies, repeated by the whole congregation, the Minister saying one verse, and the people another, as the first Christians used to do. Which, though it be not singing, yet it comes as near it, and answers the end of it, as much as it can be done in parish churches; forasmuch as, by this means, the whole congregation joins together, as if they sung, in offering up their praises and thanksgivings to their Almighty Creator and Redeemer; and therefore it always was, and still is, practised in all regular parish churches, to the glory of God, and the great edification of His people.

Thus, our first reformers took care, that Psalmody should be kept up to the highest pitch in cathedral, and, as well as it could be, in prose, in parochial churches also. And this is all that the laws then made positively requisite in this matter. But then there was another way also found out, whereby all sorts of people might have the benefit and comfort of singing the praises of God both at church, and in all other places; and that was, by turning the Psalms of David, and the other hymns, into English metre, that they might be more easily got by heart, and kept in memory, and then setting such plain musical tunes to them as might be easily learned and practised, even by the meanest of the people. The first that attempted this, was Thomas Sternhold, Esq. groom of the robes to his Majesty King Henry VIII. and then to his son King Edward VI. He, at first, translated about twenty of the Psalms, which were

then printed, with the translator's epistle dedicatory to the King, still extant. Afterward, he, John Hopkins, and others, undertook and finished all the rest. And then the whole was printed together, with this title:—

THE WHOLE BOOK
OF PSALMES,

Collected into English Meeter by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, conferred with the Hebrew, with apt Notes to sing them withall.

Set forth and allowed to be sung in all Churches, of all the People together, before and after Morning and Evening Prayer, and also before and after Sermons: and moreover in private Houses, for their godly Solace and Comfort, laying apart all ungodly Songs and Balades, which tend only to the nourishing of Vice, and corrupting of Youth.

James v.

If any be afflicted, let him pray; if any be merry, let him sing Psalms.

Col. iii.

Let the Word of God dwell plenteously in you, in all Wisdome, teaching and exhorting one another, in Psalmes, Hymnes, and spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord, with Grace in your Hearts.

London.

Printed by G. M. for the Company of Stationers.

Cum Privilegio Regis Regali.

This is the old title of the book, constantly prefixed to it in all the old London editions that I have seen, without any alteration, except that when the musical notes are left out in the body of the book, those words, 'with apt notes to sing them withall,' are left out also, as it was necessary they should be, in the title; and that the words, 'with grace,' in the second text of Scripture, are left out in some editions; and sometimes one, sometimes both the texts themselves. But that is a great fault, those texts having been, doubtless, put in from the beginning; as appears from their agreeing neither with King James's nor the Bishop's translation of the Bible, and therefore must be taken out of that which was set forth in King Edward's or his father's reign.

Now, from this, the original title of the book, there are several things much to be observed, to our present purpose. As,

1. That these Psalms were ‘set forth, and allowed to be sung in all churches:’ which could not be, without the royal authority; none having power over all the churches in the kingdom, but the King himself. And therefore, although his letters-patent, or his sign-manual, cannot be now produced; yet, that they who first printed or set forth this book, had his order or license under his hand for it, cannot be doubted. For, otherwise, they durst never have presumed to have said, that it was set forth and allowed to be sung in all churches. And if they had done it at first, they would soon have been questioned for it, and those words ordered to be left out in all future editions; but we see they have been kept in all the reigns ever since. From whence we may certainly conclude, that this translation of the Psalms stands upon the same bottom with the last, and all other translations of the Bible; that is, upon the royal prerogative and authority.

The same thing appears also from the last words in the title-page, ‘Cum privilegio Regis Regali.’ For the Company of Stationers could never have published to the world, that they had the King’s royal privilege for the printing of this book, unless they had it under his hand and seal, with all the formalities wherewith such grants used to be made by the crown; and if they had assumed to themselves any such privilege, which cannot be supposed, without the King’s grant, that would soon have been detected, and other people would have printed it as well as they, whereas none ever publicly attempted to do it in London; which plainly shews, that it was owned and acknowledged by all, that the Company had this privilege granted them from the King, who, be sure, would never grant them the privilege of printing any book, but what he himself had first allowed of; and if they had no other, this very privilege was a sufficient allowance of it. But here was plainly both the King’s order for the printing it, and his grant to that Company only to do it, which is more than they can pretend to for the printing the New Version; for, though it be said to be printed for the Company of Stationers, those words, ‘Cum Privilegio Regis Regali,’ are not added; which they would certainly have added, in the title-page of the New, as well as of the Old

Version if any such privilege had been granted to them; and if they have no such privilege for it as they have for the other, how they can print it in opposition to the other, is a thing which the Company would do well to consider of.

Another thing to be observed from the title of this book is, that the Psalms were set forth 'with apt tunes to sing them withal.' There were in those days several persons eminent for their skill in music, many of their compositions being still extant and admired, and these, it seems, did not only set tunes to the Psalms, but such as were apt and proper for the subject-matter of each Psalm; and where the same tune would serve indifferently for several Psalms, they set it only to one, and referred to that in the other; by which means the people soon learned to sing any of the Psalms in their proper tunes, both at church, and in their own houses, or wheresoever else they were. And that was one of the great and pious ends for which these Psalms were then set forth in this manner, that they might be sung, not only in all churches, by all the people together, but likewise 'in private houses, for their godly solace and comfort; laying apart all ungodly songs and ballads, which tend only to the nourishing of vice and corrupting of youth;' as it is expressed in the title-page. And if this had been generally observed ever since the first edition of this book to our days, as it was for some time in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, our youth had not been so corrupted, nor vice so rampant, as now it is.

But that which is chiefly to be observed in the title is, that this Whole Book of Psalms, collected into English Metre by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, was 'conferred with the Hebrew.' Though they who did it were doubtless good men, and as good poets as the age afforded, and, at least, one of them in great favour at court; yet it was not set forth and allowed to be used in all churches, till other learned men had conferred or compared it with the Hebrew. So great care was then taken, that nothing might be used publicly in the church, as the Word of God, but what was really so; for, although this book be part of the Holy Scripture given by inspiration of God, yet it being written originally in the Hebrew tongue, no translation of it

into any other language, either in prose or verse, is any further the Word of God, or can be properly called a 'translation of the Psalms,' than as it agrees with the Hebrew text. Where it disagrees, it is not of Divine inspiration, but human invention; and, therefore, they who undertake to translate this, or any other part of the Holy Scripture, had need be very careful of what they do; for this is not to be dealt with like other books, where a translator may take the liberty to vary from the text, and to mend it too, where he sees cause, as he often may, there being no human composition but is liable to many faults, which another may see better than the author. But it is not so with the Word of God. There is no mending of that, nor so much as varying from it, without a fault, and a great one too; not only in that to give that as the mind of God revealed in Scripture, which is not there revealed, is plain belying Him and His Holy Word; but likewise, in that by this means many may be insensibly led into dangerous, if not damnable, errors and heresies, as many have been by false translations of God's Holy Word; for, most people reading the Scripture no otherwise than as it is translated into their own language, they look upon every thing which they find in such a translation as the Word of God, especially if it be publicly owned and commonly used as such among them; and, if there be any thing in it contrary to, or differing from, the mind of God expressed in the original, they, notwithstanding, receiving it as His Word, are unavoidably drawn into mistakes, and sometimes such as may endanger both their own welfare and the peace of the Church. For the preventing of which mischief, when this translation of the Psalms was made, it was not suffered to be published till some who well understood the Hebrew had examined every part of it, whether it agreed with the original, and corrected it where it did not.

And how faithfully they, to whom this great work was referred, discharged the trust reposed in them, appears sufficiently from the work itself. For several well skilled in the Hebrew tongue, in our age, have observed this translation to agree so exactly with the Hebrew text, that they could not but wonder how Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and

such others, could make it; not considering that we have it, not as it was at first made by them, but as it was afterwards adjusted, by other learned men, to the original. And if any one will take the pains to compare this translation of the Psalms, with that in the Bible, made out of the Hebrew, in King James I.'s reign, he will find, that it generally gives the same sense of the text as that doth, in such places also where that differs from the old translation in our Common Prayer-books, except where this latter seems to give the sense more clearly than the other. In some places, I confess, it differs from both; but they are such where the text is so obscure, that interpreters do not agree about the meaning of it. In which case, it is very observable, that this old translation follows the Septuagint, the most ancient and most authentic translation that is extant, which shews not only the great learning, but likewise the extraordinary care and diligence that was used in the reviewing of it, that we might have the sense of the Hebrew text, where it was doubtful, according to the most approved interpreters of it. But, in plain uncontroverted places, this old translation in verse generally agrees so exactly with the new in prose, though made above sixty years before it, that if the latter was not in some places taken out of the old, the old must needs be drawn from the same fountain with it, or, at least, reduced to it; and so it plainly was, not in a cursory and superficial manner, but with so much art and discretion, that it often renders the sense clearer than the other doth. And where a place is equally capable of a double sense, so that some translations give it one sense, some another, this strives to take in both, that we may be sure to have the right; as I have sometimes found, in comparing this translation with the text, for which I must thank the New Version, in that it gave me the occasion of looking thus narrowly into the Old; for though I had always a good opinion of it, I could never else have thought we had such a jewel among us, which, if it was but as rare as it is common, all the learned that study the Scripture would strive to get it at any rate.

But, can we say as much of the New Version, which is now brought into competition with it? I heartily wish we could. But I do not hear that this was ever conferred with

the Hebrew as the other was, nor so much as that any of our Bishops or other learned in that language were appointed or authorized to do it; and there is too much cause to suspect that it was never done; for, if we may take our measures of its agreeing or disagreeing with the Hebrew text, from its agreeing or not agreeing with the Psalms in the new translation of the Bible, made out of the Hebrew, we may thence conclude, that there was not the care taken about this as there was about the Old Version, so far, at least, as I am able to judge; who, having got a sight of this new translation of the Psalms in verse, could not satisfy my own mind about it without comparing it with the new translation in prose, which I had no sooner begun, but I found so many variations, that I thought to have gathered together all that I judged to be so, throughout the whole book, without any other design but for my own satisfaction; but when I had gone a little way, I found them multiply so fast upon me, that I could see no end, and therefore was forced to give it over, and to content myself with observing the reason of it, which, to me, seemed to be this:—That whereas the composers and reviewers of the old translation had nothing else in their eye, but to give us the true sense of each place in as few words as could be in verse, and, therefore, keep close to the text, without deviating from it upon any account: in this new translation, there is so much regard had to the poetry, the style, the running of the verse, and suchlike inconsiderable circumstances, that it was almost impossible to avoid going from the text, and altering the true sense and meaning of it; for hence it came to pass, that although the authors, doubtless, designed a true translation, yet other things crowding into their heads at the same time, justled that design so, that it could not always take effect.

But, notwithstanding this great advantage which the old translation hath above the new, in that it comes and keeps nearer to the text, there are other things wherein the new may seem as much preferable to the old. As particularly, in that the style of the old is plain, and low, and heavy; the other is brisk, and lively, and flourished here and there with wit and fancy. But for this we may first consider, who they are that make this objection against the old

translation: not they for whom it was chiefly intended, the common people, that are the far greatest part of the kingdom: you never hear them, or any of them, complain, that the Psalms which they sing in their churches are too plain, too low, or too heavy for them; but they rather love and admire them the more for it, and are more edified by the use of them. The plainer they are, the sooner they understand them; the lower their style is, the better it is levelled to their capacities; and the heavier they go, the more easily they can keep pace with them. And therefore they are so far from looking upon this as a fault in their Psalms, that they prize them the more for it. And so do all wise and considering men, as well as they; for they know and consider, that the style of the Scripture, of which the Psalms are part, is all such: there are no enticing words of man's wisdom there, no flights of wit, no fanciful expressions, no rhetorical, much less poetical, flourishes; but every thing necessary for mankind to believe and do, is delivered there in such a plain and familiar style that all sorts of people may understand it. When Almighty God Himself speaks of Himself, He condescends so low as to use such words and expressions as we commonly use among ourselves. And seeing the whole Scripture is written in such a style, all translations of it must be so too, or else they cannot be true translations: and therefore, this is so far from being a fault, that it is one of the greatest excellencies of this old translation of the Psalms, that it doth not only keep to the sense of the text, but to the same manner of expressing it, which is there used. And so all must do, that would express the sense aright: they must not go about to fetch in fine words and phrases, but confine themselves to such as most plainly and properly signify what is meant in the text; otherwise, instead of the mind of God, they may give us only their own conceits. And that is the reason that the old translation seems so mean and dull to some kind of people, because it never goes from the plain meaning of the text, but strives to render that in as fit and proper terms as it can, howsoever low and bald they may seem to be: by which means, although it may not seem so pleasing to the ears or fancies of some men, it comes with greater force and authority upon

them, as being the very Word of Almighty God Himself; and so is really in itself more brisk and lively than any human conceits can make it.

For, as for that which we call wit and fancy, there being no such thing in the Holy Scriptures, if there be any of it in a translation, it must needs differ from the original. And although there may still be something of the general sense and design of the place to be found in it, yet it being wrapped up in such light and gaudy expressions, it will be very difficult to find it; and, if found, it will not have that power and efficacy that it hath in its plain native colours. For, that which tickles the fancy never toucheth the heart, but flies immediately into air, from whence it came; which therefore ought to be avoided, as much as it is possible, in all discourses and writings of religion. For religion is too severe a thing to be played with; especially the foundation of it, the Word of God; in which the very poetry is all solid, substantial, and Divine. And so must be the translation of it into other languages; at least, there must be nothing of flashy wit, nothing light or airy in it. If there be, it may, perhaps, serve young people for their diversion: but it can be no help to their devotion, but rather an hinderance; their minds being apt to be so much taken up with such a manner of expressing it, that they neglect the matter designed to be expressed by it. Whereas, when the Scripture, or any part of it, is so translated, that there is nothing else to exercise the thoughts upon, but only the thing itself that is there revealed, if a man that reads it thinks at all of what he reads, he must think of that, and nothing else. And therefore the old translation of the Psalms is so far from being to be blamed and despised, as it is by some, for the plainness and simplicity of its style, that it ought to be the more commended and valued for it; as it is by all that prefer the plain Word of God before the inventions of men, how well soever they may be adorned and set off.

Another cavil that some make against this old translation is, that the rhyme is not always good. They cannot deny but, for the most part, it is better than could be well expected from the age it was made in, and as good as can be desired

now ; but they say, it is sometimes faulty. And so it is in most books of English poetry, of the same bulk, that I have seen. But, what then ? The Psalms were collected into metre, that they might be better sung to God. And while devout people are singing forth the praises of God, do they mind the rhyme ? or whether the words sound alike at the end of every other verse or line ? This is not their business at that time ; neither need they ever concern themselves about it. If it was not the mode of our English poetry, and some help to the memory, it would be no matter whether there was any rhyming at all in the Psalms, so long as the metre, or number of syllables in each verse, is proportioned to the tune set to it.

But the main objection against this old translation is, that there are many old words in it, which are now grown obsolete and out of use. There may, perhaps, be some, but not many, if any at all, among the vulgar, for whose use it was chiefly designed. They still use those words, or, at least, understand them as well as any that are in common use among them. It is, we know, among the common people, that the language of every nation is best preserved. The learned, that understand other tongues, and such as converse with foreigners, are apt to take in the words of other languages and mix them with their own, and so, by degrees, lay aside some of their own for such as they have borrowed from other countries. But it is not so with the plain country people : they know no other but their own mother tongue ; and using that only upon all occasions, they still keep up the words and phrases that are proper to it, as they received them from their forefathers, and shall tell you the meaning of them better than they who are more learned. Therefore, as to such people, this objection hath no weight at all in it, nor, indeed, as to any other. For, who is it that knows not the meaning of all the words in this old translation of the Psalms ? or, at least, may not understand them, if he will, as well as any new words when he first hears them ? What exception, then, can be taken against those old words ? Are they not all true English words ? And is it any fault that they are not Latin or French ? It must come to that, at last ; for you can scarce find any better English. What

necessity, then, can there be of changing them? Must the translation of the Holy Scripture be altered, as often as any affect new words and modes of speaking? or, as some alter their clothes, only to be in the fashion? They who are thus given to change, will never want occasion for it: for, suppose we should lay aside the old words, and put new in their places; the new, in time, would grow old too; and then new ones must be invented to supply their room: and so there will be no end of changing: but every age must have a new translation of the Psalms, and of the whole Bible too. Whereas, all such public writings that are of general use, especially in religion, ought to be preserved entire (as old Acts of Parliament and law-books are), just as they were at first written; that people may know what to stick to, and not be tempted to think their religion to be as changeable as their language.

But if there was any force in this objection, it is now taken off in some late editions of this old translation of the Psalms in metre, where the old words and phrases are taken out, and such put in their places as are now in common use. Who was the author, I know not; nor by what authority the Company of Stationers printed it so altered. But I think it had as good have been let alone; and better too, for the reasons before-mentioned; and for other, which I shall not mention now, but may do it presently.

But I cannot but further observe here, that of all the metrical translations of the Psalms made since this, there is not one that I have seen but hath several words, phrases, and expressions in it, as hard, if not much harder to be understood, than any that are in this. I shall not except the New Version itself, which is now so publicly set up against the Old. I cannot say that I have read it all over; but I have gone so far in it, that I have met with many expressions which I could not understand; and therefore cannot imagine how this comes to be set up above the other, as being more plain and intelligible to all capacities. There are, perhaps, no old English words in it: but there are many taken from the Latin and French, and Greek too, which none can fully understand, except they have some skill in those languages, or, at least, more learning than is commonly found among

our country people: and besides, there are some words and expressions that have an ill aspect, and are liable to very bad constructions; which cannot be said of any thing that is found in the old translation.

That none may suspect that all this is spoken without ground, it will be necessary to give an instance or two of it; from whence they may pass their judgment upon the rest. For which purpose, therefore, I shall first set down a verse in prose, according to the new translation of the Bible; then the same verse in metre, according to the old translation; and then the same again according to the new:—

PSALM XXXVII. 34.

Wait on the Lord, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

THE OLD TRANSLATION.

Wait thou on God, and keep His way,
He shall preserve thee then,
The earth to rule, and thou shalt see
Destroy'd these wicked men.

THE NEW TRANSLATION.

Wait still on God, and keep His way,
And thou, advanc'd the land to sway,
Thy firm possession ne'er shalt quit.
With longing eyes thou soon shalt see
The wicked's fatal tragedy,
And as a glad spectator sit.

Here we see the old translation keeps close to the text, without adding or diminishing any thing in it. But the new is rather a paraphrase than a version in this, as well as many other places, stretching the sense much further than either the words or the design of the place can bear. God here promiseth, that His people shall inherit the land; but not, that they 'shall never quit their possession.' That is the poet's own fiction. And so it is, that the righteous shall, with 'longing eyes,' see the destruction of the wicked; and be 'glad spectators' of it. This also is foreign to the text, and to truth too. For, though God hath threatened destruction to the wicked, and hath said His people shall see it,

where is it said, that they shall long, and be glad to see it? I had thought all the righteous upon earth had learned to desire and long for the repentance of the wicked, and rejoice to see them converted, rather than destroyed: but here they are taught another lesson, if they would learn it; which I suppose, they will not be very forward to do, notwithstanding it is got into the Psalms, a book they so much admire. For, they know it was not originally there; but is a perfect stranger, got in they know not how. Let us try another place, to the same purpose:—

PSALM XCI. 8.

Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold, and see the reward of the wicked.

THE OLD TRANSLATION.

But thou shalt see it for thy part,
Thine eyes shall well regard,
That even like to their desert,
The wicked have reward.

THE NEW TRANSLATION.

Thou only shalt look on and see
The wicked's deserv'd tragedy,
And count the sinner's mournful gains.

Here, again, it is obvious, that the old translation confines itself to the plain words of the text; but the new goes far beyond it. The text only saith, that the righteous shall see the wicked punished as they deserve: but this translation adds, that they shall ‘count the sinner’s mournful gains.’ It is an odd expression, I confess, which few people know what to make of. All the meaning that I can apprehend in it, is, that the righteous shall not only see, but count the punishments which wicked men shall have for their wickedness. But this is more than the text saith, and more than the righteous can do: for, the punishments of the wicked being innumerable and eternal, though the righteous shall see them, they will not be able to count them, no more than a man can count the sand upon the sea-shore, whensoever he sees it. It would be well for the sinners, if their ‘mournful

gains' should be no greater, nor more than could be counted, as this translation would make them : but I would not have them trust it ; for, though it be in this translation, it is not in the text, nor in any other part of the Holy Scriptures ; which plainly teach us, that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment ; and, therefore, such as can never be counted or reckoned up.

By this we may see something of the style of this New Version, such as is used only by one kind of writers, not by any other, much less in common conversation, as the style of the Old is, and ought to be. It is a 'New Version' indeed, a great part of it running in a style that is wholly new, according to the new modes of writing, invented and practised only in this age, and will go near to expire with it, and be condemned in the next, as much as they are now admired ; at least, in all sacred writings. There are many such new phrases and romantic expressions in this version, which are taken up by our present poets ; and being now in fashion, may serve well enough in other places, but can by no means suit with a Divine poem, much less by one inspired by God Himself. I shall not undertake to count them, if I could ; for, if we could get the whole number, they would be but 'mournful gains.' Neither was this in my thoughts, when I made choice of the verses above written, to shew the truth of what I had before observed. But that which I took more special notice of, was, that in both those verses (and, for aught I know, in others) there is the word 'tragedy' used : which is perfect 'Greek' to our common people ; they knowing no more the meaning of it, than they do the language it comes from. A comedy and a tragedy is all one to them : few of them ever saw either of them acted, and it is no matter whether they ever do. How, then, can they understand what is here meant by spectators sitting in a playhouse and there seeing a tragedy ? Is there any thing in the old translation so strange and unintelligible to them as this ?

But that is not all. How came the righteous to be here represented, as seeing the destruction of the wicked, as people see a tragedy in a playhouse ? They in a playhouse know, that notwithstanding all the scuffle upon the stage, as if they were wounding and slaying one another, yet, after

all, there is no hurt done : it was all but in jest, and to make sport for the spectators. And will the destruction of sinners be so ? in show only, and not in reality ? They will find it to be in good earnest, though all the poets in the world should represent it only as a feigned tragedy. Be sure, the Judge doth not here say that the righteous shall sit as spectators in a playhouse, and see the wicked acting a tragedy ; but, that they shall see them destroyed, and punished according as they had deserved.

But, how comes King David to be here brought in as speaking of a tragedy acted in a playhouse ? Was he ever at a play in his life ? Was there any such thing ever seen in his court ? or in all Jerusalem ? or in all his kingdoms ? or in all the world at that time ? If there had, we should certainly have heard of it somewhere or other. But we know that both the thing and the word was invented by the Greeks, a long time after King David's reign. And therefore it is an unaccountable piece of liberty, or rather licentiousness of poetry, to make him allude to spectators sitting and seeing a tragedy acted, at a time when there was no such thing in the world.

This is bad enough : but there is still a great deal worse in this poetical strain. For, though David composed the Psalms, he did it by the inspiration of God : it was the Holy Ghost that spoke in him and by him. So that Almighty God Himself is here represented as alluding to tragedies, in the promises which He makes unto His people ; telling them, that when the wicked shall be punished, they shall sit and look on, as a spectator doth, when a tragedy is acted in a playhouse. But it cannot be supposed that He should thus signify His pleasure to His people, by such a similitude, if the thing itself was displeasing to Him. His very alluding to it, upon so solemn an occasion, would be a sufficient indication that He approved, or, at least, allowed of it ; insomuch, that if there had been any such expression in the text of the Psalms, none could have doubted of the lawfulness of acting or seeing tragedies or other plays acted, the Holy Scripture itself being, upon this supposition, so plainly for it. And they who believe this to be a true version of that holy book can have nothing to say against it.

For, suppose one of our honest countrymen being invited to go to see a tragedy, and having some scruples upon him whether it was lawful or not, should go to one of his neighbours, that is reckoned a judicious and knowing man, to be resolved in the case. He, having heard the question, presently returns this answer: ‘ Neighbour, I do not wonder that you make a question of it, whether you may lawfully go and see a tragedy or other play acted, and there spend some of the time that lies so heavy upon your hand; for I myself had once such a scruple in my mind: but it is gone now; so that I make no doubt at all of it, since our doctor brought down the New Book of Psalms, which, you know, is now used every Sunday in our Church, by his order. For, looking over that book, I find there were tragedies acted in David’s time, and people used then to sit as spectators, as they now do in our playhouses. David speaks of it as a known and common thing in those days, without blaming them for it: which he, be sure, being a man after God’s Own heart, would not have done, if it had been any way contrary to the law of God: and not David only, but God Himself, speaking in him, saith, that His people shall see the wicked’s fatal tragedy, and sit there as glad spectators, much pleased with the act. It is true, I do not find this in the Psalms that are in our Bibles or Common Prayer-books, nor in our old Singing-Psalms: but it is in this New Book of Psalms, which being the last, must needs be the best: as our doctor, be sure, knows; otherwise he would never have brought it among us, who are committed to his care; much less would he have suffered it to be sung in our Church, in time of Divine service. And therefore you cannot doubt but that this is done exactly according to the mind of God, in Scripture. And seeing God Himself here speaks of His people’s sitting as spectators to see a tragedy, without the least intimation that He would not have them do it, you cannot in reason make any question of it, but that it is agreeable to His will; and you may lawfully go when you please to see a tragedy, having now His license and authority for it.’

Now, what can our honest man reply to all this? This is so natural a way of reasoning among our country people,

that there is no withstanding it. They know the Psalms of David are part of the Holy Scriptures: they see this New Version, expressly called 'The Psalms of David,' in print; and they sing it, as such, in their Church, by the order of the Minister who hath the care of their souls; and therefore cannot but believe it to be the very Word of God, as much as any other part of the Holy Scriptures. And seeing it is here said that the righteous shall look on, and see the wicked's deserved tragedy, they presently conclude that they not only may, but ought to go and see a tragedy acted, that they may be able to understand this part of Scripture. For, if they should never see one, how can they tell what is meant by being a spectator there? And therefore make no further scruple of it. Thus, by having this version commonly used among them, people may be brought to believe that the acting and seeing tragedies, or any sort of plays, is allowed and authorised by God Himself: which, whatsoever the stage may have, I am sure the Church hath no cause to thank the authors for.

Not that I think they had any such ill design in composing this 'New Version.' For, though I have no personal knowledge of them, yet from their employing their thoughts and parts upon so Divine a subject, I cannot but believe that their aim in general was good; and that these and suchlike expressions (of which there are several in this version), which seem to have an ill tendency, dropt from them unawares, without their foreseeing the ill use that some men may make of them. Neither do I see how it can be avoided in any version, which the author contrives to make fine and modish; for, when that is in the eye, it will hinder it from looking much further. If a word or phrase appear but gay and fashionable at present, little regard will be had to any remoter consequences that may follow upon it: and not much, whether it be fit and proper for the place it is designed for; at least, not so much as is necessary in a version of any part of Holy Writ; which is no further true, than as it agrees exactly with the original text. Though the poetry be never so exact, and the style as elegant as words can make it, yet, after all, unless it truly and fully expresseth the meaning of the Divine Author, it fails in the main point:

it is no true version, nor deserves to be called by that name.

But now, as to the Old Version, the composers and reviewers of that having more regard to the sense than to the words, and to the words no further than as they might best represent the sense, they used no more than what were just necessary to the translating the sense into English metre, and therefore none that could be liable to misconstruction, any more than the sense itself is. And whatsoever other accomplishments it may seem to want, it hath this, the greatest accomplishment of any version, that it is true, or agreeable to the text; expressing the sense and meaning of it all along, in as fit and proper words as could be then found out in the English tongue. Insomuch, that although some few of the words being not so commonly used in this age as they were in that, it hath been thought expedient to have them changed for such as are now in common use; yet it is very difficult to do it, without altering the sense too. It hath been attempted, as I observed before, in some late editions; but to little purpose, as might easily be shewn from many instances. It may be sufficient, at present, to give one or two.

The word that most stumble at is at the very threshold, in the first verse of the first Psalm, which the last translation in prose renders thus: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Only in the margin, over against the word 'ungodly,' is put 'or wicked,' that you may take which you please, they being both much of the same signification. But in our old translation of the Psalms in metre, this verse runs thus:

The man is blest that hath not bent
To wicked rede his ear,
Nor led his life as sinners do,
Nor sate in scorners' chair.

That which they find fault with here is the word 'rede,' which they say, is now grown out of use, so that many do not know the meaning of it. But must the word be blamed for people's ignorance? This is not only the best, but the

only English word I know of in all our tongue, that signifies that which we otherwise call 'advice,' or 'counsel:' for these two words, the one is taken from the French, the other from the Latin: but 'rede' is truly and originally an English Saxon word; commonly used, to this day, in Germany, from whence our language came: only there they now write it 'rhat;' as in Poland, 'rada;' in Holland, 'raed.' In our old Saxon books it is written 'ræd;' and, therefore, 'rede,' as it is written in the translation of the Psalms (not 'read,' as in some later editions), is properly a true English word, and was always used in the same signification as we now use counsel and advice, words plainly of foreign extraction. And, therefore, I can see no reason why it should give place to them: it is very hard, that a native of our own country should be cast out, only to make way for a foreigner; and that too for no other reason but because he is old: whereas, for that very reason, he ought rather to be kept in and maintained. Let any one, if he can, find a better English, truly English word, to put in its place. I believe he will find it a hard matter. Be sure, they who have taken it out in the late edition, have left the place empty: for they have thus altered the two first lines of the said verse:

The man is blest that hath not lent
To wicked men his ear.

Where, we see, the word 'rede' is left out, and no other of the same or like signification substituted in the room of it; whereby the sense is made imperfect, and far short of the design of the holy writer in that place. For, he describes that man to be blessed, that doth not hearken to the rede of ungodly and wicked men, so as to do what they, as such, advise him to. Whereas, according to this version, he must not so much as lend his ear to wicked men, or hear any thing they say, whether they give him any counsel or not: which is far from the sense of the text. Neither can it be rightly expressed without the word 'rede,' or some other equivalent to it; that being the most material word in that part of the text, without which the design of the place is wholly lost; as it plainly is in this new alteration of the Old Version, where

that word is neither expressed, nor so much as implied : so difficult a thing it is to alter any thing in the Old Version without making it worse.

But let us try another place, where a word occurs that, at first sight, may seem the strangest of any in the book. It is in the translation of these words of the Psalmist, "There Ps. 91. 10 shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling," which the Old Version in metre renders thus :

Thou shalt not need none ill to fear,
With thee it shall not mell;
Nor yet the plague shall once come near
The house where thou dost dwell.

Here, in the first line, are two negatives, which was usual heretofore, and as emphatical in English as in Greek. But that which they are so much displeased with here is the word 'mell.' If it had been 'meddle,' they would have liked it well enough; for then the sense would have been plain to them also, the very same that it is in the text, 'It shall not befall thee, or meddle with thee.' But, what is this word 'mell?' In plain English, it is nothing but the very word 'meddle,' rightly spelt and pronounced, as our learned etymologist hath observed; and it is still pronounced so in the northern counties, signifying, to mingle oneself with any other's person or matter. And, therefore, how strange soever the word may seem, it is much stranger that any should be displeased with it for its being rightly spelt. They should rather commend this version, for keeping up the right pronunciation of the word, which otherwise might have been lost; at least in some places, where it hath been long corrupted. But, let us now hear how well they who undertook to mend the old translation have mended the matter in this place. They have thus altered it in some late editions :—

No evil thou shalt need to fear,
With thee it shall go well.

Where we may observe, that as in altering the word 'rede,' they come short of the sense of the text, so here they go beyond it. For it is not here said, 'It shall go well with

thee ;' that is more than is in the text, which saith only, 'No evil shall befall thee.' So that this alteration fails as much in adding to God's Word, as the other doth in diminishing from it. Both which faults ought to be carefully avoided in all translations of the Holy Scripture, as they are in this old one in metre, so exactly, that it is evident from these, as well as from many other instances, that there is no meddling, or, to speak more properly, no melling with it, without spoiling it.

This may serve as a specimen of what may be said in defence of the Old Version of the Psalms, against the new alterations that have been made in it. I never heard who made them, nor by what authority it was done, or whether by any at all: but whosoever it was, he took upon him a greater task than he was aware of, and more than was fit for one man to undertake. For this Old Version of the Psalms in metre, was the work of many, if not of most of the learned men of that time. Though it was composed at first by few, yet, as I have already observed, it was afterwards reviewed and compared with the Hebrew; which could not be done but by the most learned of that age, who took such pains, and used such skill in doing it, that there was not a verse, not a sentence, not a word, but what was strictly examined by them; and nothing suffered to pass but what was proper to express the true sense and meaning of the text all along: insomuch that when it was set forth, it found that general applause and approbation that it was used by all the clergy and laity, learned and unlearned, all over the Church and kingdom; and continued to be so for above one hundred and forty years together: and after all this, for a private person to undertake to correct and mend it, was a bold attempt; and though I doubt not but he designed to serve the Church in it, yet he could hardly have done it a greater disservice, in a thing of this nature. For the Singing-Psalms being now printed (I know not by what authority) with these alterations, and commonly bound up with our Bibles and Common Prayer-books, when people come to sing, as they are wont, to the honour of God, some sing one thing, and others another; which breeds a great confusion, where every thing should be done decently and in order. And

besides, it is a great cheat put upon the people that buy the Psalms: they think they buy one thing when they have another: they expect such Singing-Psalms as they used to have, and are put off with such as are so altered in many places, that they are not the same: and not altered for the better neither, but generally for the worse; for I do not perceive that it is any where altered for any other purpose but only to accommodate it to the humour of the present age, not to the text. It agreed with that well enough as it was before; and these alterations are so far from making it agree better, that they often make it differ from the sense of the text, as in the instances abovementioned, and in many other which might be produced, if there was occasion for it.

Wherefore, all things considered, I do not see wherein this Old Version of the Psalms in metre is one jot the better for the alterations that have been made in it, nor what necessity there was of making any at all; much less, how a thing of such public use can ever be altered without public authority, or by that, so as to be made much better than it is, or, at least, than it was when first set forth and published. It hath since that time been often printed, oftener, I believe, than any one book in England; and when the press hath committed an error in one edition, it is commonly propagated, and runs through all that follow after; by which means there are several such errors got into it, which have given the greatest occasion to all the clamours that have been made against it. If they could be mended, so that we could have the whole book as it was at first composed and corrected, there could be no material exception made against it by any who prefer the plain word of God before their own or other men's conceits. And take it as it is now commonly printed with all its faults (except such as spoil the sense), and you will find, upon an impartial examination, that they are so few, and those few so inconsiderable, in comparison of what may be found in other books of the same kind, and that the whole is generally so well adapted to the text, and to the use it was designed for, that there is no reason why it should be laid aside; but all that can be imagined, in a thing of this nature, that it should still be

continued and used as it hath been all along ever since our Reformation.

For, suppose it was not so good a version as really it is, but only tolerable, so that it may still be used, as it hath been hitherto, without any detriment to the Church, reproach to religion, or hazard of people's souls; yet it having been used all along in our Church, since it was reformed; to throw it away now, and take up another in its stead, what a reflection would that be upon our Reformers! People would be apt to think they were a company of very ignorant or careless men, that knew not how to make a good version of the Psalms, or if they did, yet they set forth such a one to be sung in all Churches that was not fit to be sung in any Church at all, any longer than until wiser men could be found out to make a better; and, by consequence, that whatsoever else they did, being of the same piece with that, was so weak, that it could never have held up so long, but would have fallen to the ground before now, if it had not been backed with the laws of the realm, as the Book of Common Prayer was. And it was very well it was so; for otherwise, at this rate, that also would be laid aside whensoever two or three can agree together to shew their talent in making new forms of prayer; and so, in time, we might have as many, or more than ever: one, 'secundum usum London;' another, 'secundum usum Richmond;' another, 'secundum usum Sarum;' and so on, 'secundum usum' of every city and great town in England. For there is no such place but may afford some or other that think themselves wiser than all their forefathers, and capable of making better prayers as well as better translations of the Psalms. But if this liberty should be allowed to any that have a mind to take it, what would become of our Reformation? That also must be reformed, and every thing that was then done now laid aside to make way for something that will suit better with the genius of the present age; which abounds in learning, and wisdom, and piety, so far beyond the last, that there is no comparison between them. I heartily wish it did so: but there is little sign of it, when we are so insensible of God's goodness to us in what was then done, and so ungrateful to the happy instruments of it, as to find fault thus, without

any ground, with what they did, and throw it away as stuff not fit for the use they made it for.

Neither doth this reflect only upon our first Reformers, but likewise upon all the convocations that have been held ever since. They are the proper judges of what is or is not fit to be used in the service of God ; and all the members of them, both in the Upper and Lower House, knew all along that this old translation of the Psalms was used in all the churches throughout the kingdom, and particularly in those to which they themselves belonged ; and yet we do not hear that any of them ever censured it, or so much as complained of it, much less condemned it to be cast away, or desired that a new one might be made and used instead of it. If any of them had done thus, they would certainly have taken care that such a one might have been made and reviewed by themselves, or some appointed by them to do it, that it might be set forth with their approbation as well as by the king's authority : but seeing that was never done, it is evident that all the convocations that have been held since the Reformation have approved of this translation, so far, at least, that it might be still continued in the Church ; and never judged it either necessary or expedient that any other should be brought in, or the old one so much as altered, which would be a great reproach to them, and so to the whole Church of England represented by them, if there was any real necessity of either.

And as the whole Church in general, so every particular bishop, parson, and vicar in it, is concerned to defend himself from the aspersion which would be hereby cast upon him ; for they having all, in their respective dioceses and parishes, the care of souls committed to them, are obliged, in conscience, to see that the people under their charge have all things necessary to the Salvation of their souls, and every thing the best they can get in its kind. But they have all suffered their flocks to use this Old Version of the Psalms in their churches, and they themselves have joined with them in it, and so have commended it to them by their own practice, which they can never answer to God or their own consciences, if it was such a version as was not fit to be used by them, but deserved to be banished out

of their churches, that another might be brought in which should be more for their edification. For I do not hear that any one of them ever admonished his people of this, or told them 'it was not his fault they had not better Psalms : for his part, he did not like them, but would endeavour to get them better as soon as he could ; but they must stay till better could be made, and allowed to be sung in churches. In the meanwhile they must take heed how they use these old Psalms ; for though they might, perhaps, be tolerable, and serve well enough for the blind times they were made in, yet now they are grown old and musty, and very unwholesome food for their souls.' This every Minister was bound, some way or other, to give his people notice of, if there was any such occasion, as is now pretended, for it ; and they were highly to be blamed for not doing it. But we never heard of any that have done it, and therefore ought, in justice and charity, to conclude that the whole body of the clergy, down from the Reformation to the last year, never looked upon it as a crime, but were fully satisfied with their and their people's using the Old Version of Psalms, and that there was no necessity of introducing a new one, as some few have lately done, and so have separated themselves from the rest of the body in this particular, for reasons best known to themselves.

But what would the people say, if this was done all the kingdom over ? They have been accustomed from their youth to sing these old Psalms in their churches every Lord's Day, and have found such extraordinary benefit and comfort from that most excellent and Heavenly spirit of piety and devotion that runs through them, and moves upon their souls in the due use of them, that they have got many of them by heart, and are able to repeat and sing them by themselves, in their own houses or closets, or wheresoever they are : and whensoever they have a mind, as all good people often have, to be cheerful and merry, to rejoice in the Lord, and magnify His glorious Name for His manifold favours and mercies to them, then these Psalms come into their minds, and fill them with unspeakable joy and thankfulness to God, and with reverence and fear of His Holy Name : so that whatsoever their condition is, they find some-

thing here that suits it as exactly as if it was designed for it. They also that cannot read, by the frequent use of these plain Psalms, can say many of them by heart, and call them to remembrance upon all occasions, and exercise their faith, and fear, and trust on God, in the repetition of them. Upon which, and many such accounts, our common people, which, as they are the far greatest part of the nation, so they afford the greatest number of sincere Christians, they have such a value and fondness for these old Psalms, that they would not part with them for the world: and, after all, to force them from them would be to rob them of the patrimony which God, the Church, and their forefathers, have left them for their direction, instruction, and comfort, in the various changes they are subject to in this mortal life; insomuch that I have sometimes wondered to hear, how they have been nettled and disturbed at the very report that there was such a thing in hand; printing of papers, writing of letters, and running about with them to all they thought would have any compassion of them; begging and beseeching them, as for their lives, that they would use all the interest they had that their old Psalms might not be taken from them. From whence the least that can be inferred is, that whatsoever other people, who seldom use these Psalms, and never any otherwise than in a customary and superficial manner, may think of them, yet they who have been long accustomed to a hearty and sincere use of them, have found, by their own experience, that they have been of such mighty advantage to them, that they cannot bear the thoughts of being deprived of them, or having any other imposed upon them. And what necessity can there be? What reason can be given for the raising such a disturbance in the nation about the Psalms that are to be sung in churches?

Is there any thing heretical in that version which the people so much admire? any thing disagreeable to the Word of God? any thing profane, light, or comical? any thing tending to rebellion or sedition? any thing that may be easily turned to the corruption of people's faith or manners? I wish the New Version was as free from all such imputations as the Old; which is so free from them, that among all the exceptions that have been made against

it, nothing of that nature hath been ever charged upon it; nor can ever be: it being so far from having any thing in it that may do hurt, that there is nothing in it but what may do people as much good as it is possible for any version of the Psalms to do; and therefore to unsettle people's minds, and disturb their peace and quiet, by casting it out of the Church after it hath been so long in it, is a thing so unaccountable that one would wonder how it could get into the thoughts of any man that ever looks before him and considers the consequences of what he doeth.

Neither do the people only, but the clergy likewise, suffer by this attempt. Many have suffered already, and many more will do so, if it should go on. I speak not of the hard words that have been given them, and the groundless reflections that have been made upon those whose judgments would not suffer them to comply with it, which are the far greatest part, or rather, almost the whole body of the clergy: for they, I hope, are wiser men and better Christians than to take notice of such revilers, any further than to pity and forgive them. But, what divisions will this make among the clergy themselves!—while some are for the Old Version, others for the New; one useth this, another that, in his Church: and each thinking that he useth the best, is apt, such is the weakness of human nature, to undervalue the other's judgment, and cast reflections upon him. But, in the meanwhile, what is become of our uniformity? Is there to be none in the Church, but what is to be settled by Act of Parliament? And, what will the people think of these things? If Ministers themselves cannot agree about it, how can they expect their parishioners should do so? And what confusion will this make in parishes, where the Minister brings in this New Version! Some of the people may perhaps submit to it, but others will certainly be against it, and against him too, for bringing it in: as we see by the parish in London, where, as I have read in print, the Minister brought it in and the vestry cast it out again. And what could the Minister say to it? For they certainly had as much right to throw out the New Version as he had to throw out the Old, which had been used there before he or his great-grandfather was born, unless he be a very old

man indeed. But at this rate, how can Ministers keep their parishes in any tolerable order? And if they cannot do it in London, how can our Ministers in the country do it? It is out of respect to them that I have written this; that they may not hazard the peace of the Church, and of their parishes, and consequently the success of their ministry; and all for no purpose, as appears, I hope, sufficiently from the foregoing discourse.

But I am much of opinion, that all these pains might have been spared, for that this Old Version of the Psalms in metre can never be cast out by any artifice whatsoever: forasmuch as it hath not only immemorial custom and prescription to plead (though that, one would think, should be enough to keep it in), but it is got into almost all the Bibles and Common Prayer-books, as well as churches, in England; by which means, there are millions of them dispersed over the kingdom. There is not a family where any one can read, but there is one or more of the Psalm-books there; and in many families, more than inhabitants; so that no one thing can be so properly said to be got into all hands as this. How, then, is it possible to get it out again? Must all the Bibles and Common Prayer-books be changed, or bound up anew, that the New Version may be put into them? What a charge would that be to the nation! and when could it be effected? But if the Old be continued in all the said books, as formerly, what will become of the New? People will never mind that, so long as they have another in their Bibles, and a better too. For, all that I have said about the inconvenience and ill consequences of changing the one for the other, is only upon supposition that they were of equal worth and value: but he who considers how much the Old is plainer to all capacities, better fitted to raise devotion, less liable to be abused, and, above all, how closer it keeps to the original text, and to the sense and meaning of God's Holy Word, than that which is now set up against it; can never think that it will give place to that in all churches, so long as there is a man in England that knows how to distinguish between them.

But, is not all this overruled by the royal authority? That may be pretended, but without ground. The New

Version, they say, is allowed by the King; so, as we have shewn, was the Old; which, therefore, in this respect also, stands, at least, upon equal ground with the New. And though the King hath allowed the New, he hath not forbidden the Old: neither hath he 'commanded,' but barely 'allowed' the New to be used in churches: as appears from the order itself, as it is printed; wherein, after the recital of the petition, it is said, 'His Majesty, taking the same into his royal consideration, is pleased to order in council, that the said New Version of the Psalms in English metre be, and the same is hereby allowed and permitted to be used in all churches, chapels, and congregations, as shall think fit to receive the same.' Where we may see his Majesty's great wisdom and goodness, in that although he was graciously pleased to allow and permit this version, yet he would do no more than only allow and permit it to be used, and that too, only in such places, 'as shall think fit to receive the same.' Here is no command or injunction, nor the least intimation of his Majesty's pleasure, that it should be any where received, but rather that all should consider (as I and others have done), whether it be fit to be received, or not; and then to receive it, or not receive it, according as they do or do not think fit. So that he doth not so much as allow it to be used any where, but where it is thought fit to be received. But what, then, is the effect of the royal permission or allowance? It hath this great effect, that by virtue thereof, this New Version of the Psalms may now be used in all [such] churches, chapels, and congregations, as shall think fit to receive the same, without their being liable to be called into question for it in any of his Majesty's Courts, as otherwise they might be. Which makes me sometimes wonder to hear, that in some places they publicly use neither this New Version of the Psalms, nor the Old, but some other, which were never allowed by any prince, who alone could do it. What they can answer, if called to account for it, I know not; it is well if they themselves do. But this New Version, be sure, may be lawfully used wheresoever it is thought fit to be received, now that his Majesty hath been pleased to permit and allow it: although he hath neither commanded nor so

much as recommended it, as his royal grandfather did in the like case, as we shall see presently.

But though his Majesty hath not, yet the Lord Bishop of London, they say, hath recommended it. Suppose he hath, he recommended it only to the clergy of his own diocese, not to any other : and his recommendation of it to them also being grounded upon his Majesty's permission, it can be extended no further, than that he recommends it to be used in such churches of his diocese as shall think fit to receive the same, without laying any command or obligation upon them to use it. That great Prelate understands himself better, than to take upon him to command that which his Majesty thought good only to permit. Neither do I find that he sent his recommendation to his Clergy by an officer, as is usual in such cases, where he or any other bishop signifies his pleasure to them, what he would have them do. I have lately seen some of his Clergy, but cannot hear that he ever sent itt o them, or any way recommended it to them, or any one particularly ; which he would certainly have done, if he had a mind, or thought it either necessary or expedient they should use it. But it is plain, that his Lordship also leaves all under his jurisdiction to the liberty which is given them, of judging whether it be fit or no. And, therefore, although there be but few churches in his diocese wherein it is used, so few, that if I be not misinformed, they can scarce be termed any in comparison of those wherein it is not ; yet, notwithstanding, I never heard that he blamed any for not using it ; taking it for granted, according to his wonted candour and temper, that the only reason why they have not received it is, because they do not think it fit. And, indeed, I do not see how they can, considering the great inconveniences that would necessarily follow upon it ; such as make it altogether impracticable. Neither is this the first time that it hath been found to be so ; as will plainly appear from this short account of what happened in the reign of King Charles I.

After the new translation of the Bible was finished by the order of King James I., the said king, judging it very proper and convenient that a new translation of the Psalms in metre should be made exactly according to that new

translation in the Bible, he would not commit that work to any other, but undertook it himself, employing his vacant hours in the composing of it, till he had collected the whole Book of Psalms into English metre, so exactly according to the sense, and as near as it was possible to the very words of the new translation in prose, that he set verse by verse, one in prose against the other in metre, that any one, at first sight, might see how well they agreed. After the advancement of this wise and learned prince to the Kingdom of Heaven, his son, King Charles I., of ever-blessed memory, finding among his papers this New Version of the Psalms in metre, composed by his royal father, he ordered it to be printed, and it is still extant, with these words on the title-page, ‘The Psalms of King David, translated by King James;’ and underneath, ‘Cum Privilegio Regiæ Majestatis:’ and on the opposite page, his royal order concerning the same is engraven in these remarkable words:—

‘CHARLES REX.

‘Having caused this translation of the Psalms (whereof our late dear father was author) to be perused, and it being found to be exactly and truly done, We do hereby authorize the same to be imprinted, according to the patent granted thereupon, and do allow them to be sung in all the churches of our dominions, recommending them to all our good subjects for that effect.’

Whence we may first observe, that King Charles himself here positively affirms, under his hand, that his father was the author of this translation of the Psalms; so that we cannot doubt but that he really was so, how incredible soever it may seem, that he should find leisure to complete such a work, the only work we know of this nature that was ever composed by a prince of so large dominions. But he hath other works besides this still extant, singular and extraordinary in their kind. We may here likewise observe, that although this Version of the Psalms was made by a king, and by his own dear father, yet King Charles I. would not let it pass into the world, nor allow it to be used in churches, till he had caused it to be perused by such whose judgments he could rely upon, that it was ‘exactly and

truly done;’ or an exact and true translation of David’s Psalms. When he was fully satisfied in that point, by such learned men as he had entrusted with the perusal of it, then, and not till then, he authorised it to be printed, and allowed it to be ‘sung in all churches of his dominions,’ without any limitation, and without making any question but that all Churches of his dominions would think fit to receive a Version of the Psalms, made by his father, allowed by himself, and so well approved of as that was; yet, howsoever, that he might give it all the countenance and encouragement that a thing of this nature was capable of, he did not only allow it to be sung in all churches of his dominions, but recommended it also, under his royal hand too, ‘to all his subjects for that effect,’ even that they should use it in all their churches.

How can any New Version of the Psalms in metre ever come upon the Old with greater force and advantage than this did? Who could have thought but that this would have been received and used in all the churches of England with applause and triumph, and with acclamations of joy and thankfulness, to the memory of so great a monarch employed in so good a work, especially when it was not only allowed but recommended by another monarch, whose piety and goodness was too great for this world to bear long, and whose praise was then, and ever will be, in all churches? It cannot be doubted but that many immediately received it, many more than have received that which is now set up; yet, after all, they could not hold it long, but they who had taken it up were soon forced to lay it down again. The Old Version had got such firm possession of the hearts of the people, as well as of the Churches, that it could not be removed or turned out, no, not by a royal version, recommended and confirmed by royal authority; but still it kept its place in the Church, and hath continued to do so all along to these times; whereas the other hath lain hid for these many years in private studies and libraries, known to very few, and used publicly by none. And if a translation of King David’s Psalms into English metre, made by King James, and recommended by King Charles I. to be used in all churches; if that was not able to jostle

out the old translation that was made by Thomas Sternhold, John Hopkins, and others, how any other, much less one made by private persons, and never recommended by any prince, can ever do it, let all the world judge.

Some, perhaps, may wonder why any one should thus trouble himself about so low and mean a subject as this is generally thought to be. But I think nothing mean or low that hath any relation to the service of God and His Church. And although I was surprised, at first, with the report, that there was a New Version of the Psalms in metre designed to be brought over the head of the Old, yet I had no thoughts of taking any further notice of it, till very lately, that I heard, by a second rebound from the prints which go about the country, that the New Version was received into a great church near the City of London. Whether it be so or no, I know not. But, howsoever, this put me upon thinking how much it concerned all the members, as well as the Clergy, of the Church of England, to stand up for her reputation in using the Old Version so many years together as she hath done, when, if there had been any such need or occasion for it, she had, all along, learned men enough to have made another much better than the New; I do not say than the Old, neither did she think so; if she had, she would, most certainly, have procured such a one to be made and allowed before now. And, withal, I considered how much it behoves all that are really for our Reformed Church to stand up for those who reformed it, and for what they did to that intent and purpose, who did all things so well, that if the discipline, worship, manner of life, and every thing else, as well as doctrine established by them, could have been kept up and practised according to their pious model and design, our Church, as then reformed, might, under God's protection, have continued so, without interruption, to the end of the world. Now, mercy and truth preserve it.

THE END.

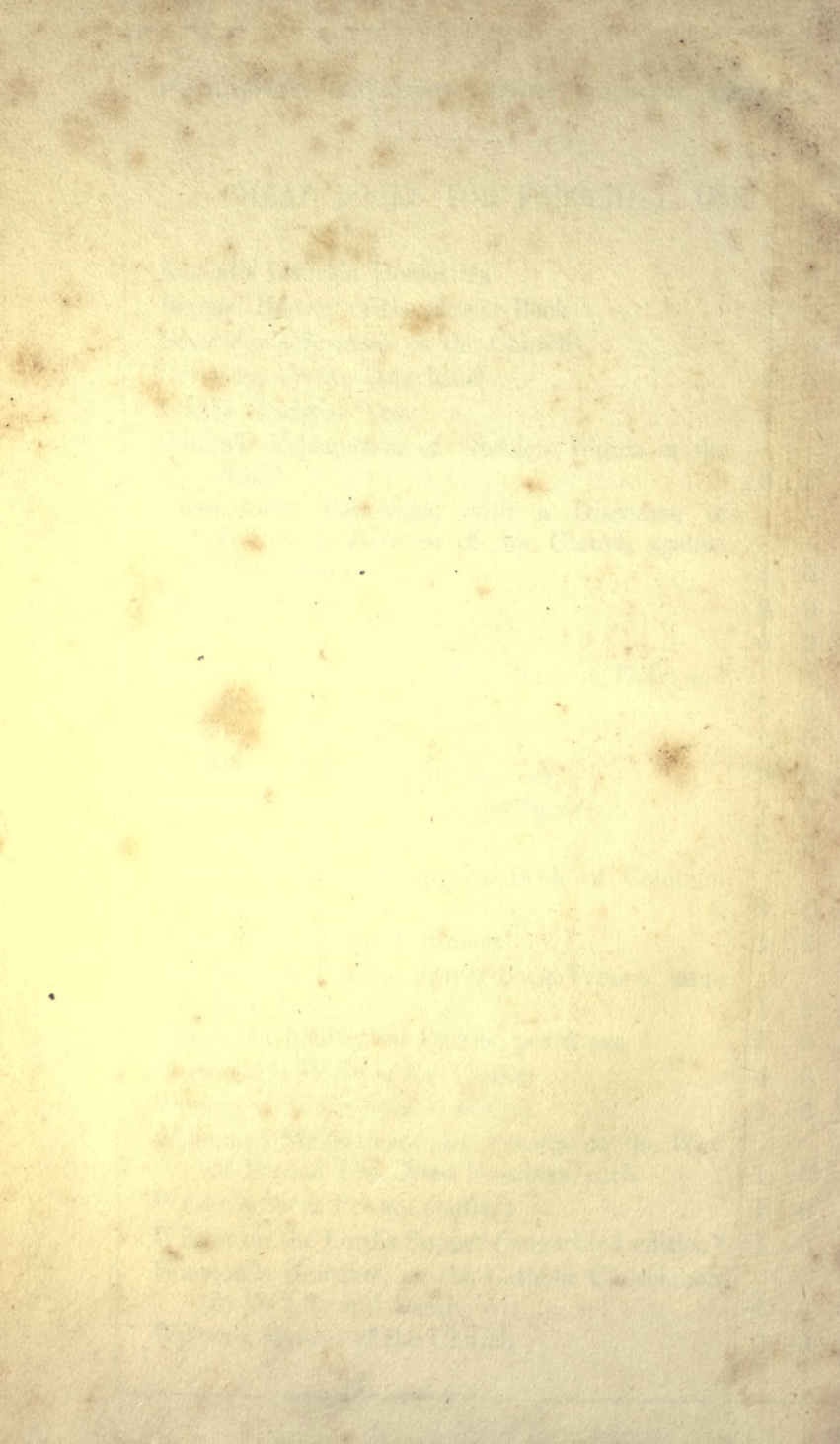
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